

CINEMA

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Papers

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A Special Report

**FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI &
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A different tale to tell: An interview with Bill Bennett, director of *A Street in San Francisco*



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Real men don't watch UHF

Short-term gains are irresistible to governments. Not only do they look good on the balance sheet but, by the time their harmful, long-term effects have begun to register, they're no longer an issue. Anyway, the other lot is usually in power by then and can, if necessary, be blamed. All in all, it's pretty much of a no-loss situation.

There are two basic forms of short-term hatchet jobs. The first is privatization, which means flugging things off to the private sector and letting it make the calls. That is the option hanging over Film Australia. The other is the euphemistically-named 'rationalization'. The merger of the SBS with the ABC comes under that heading, and it has all the worst features of a short-term gain: it is ill-conceived, inadequately thought-out, will save very little money and will be almost impossible to reverse.

Not that it comes as much of a surprise. The decision to shift the SBS onto UHF was clearly the beginning of a marginalization process. The FCC in the United States used the same trick to marginalize its own Public Broadcasting Service. With crowded airwaves — read: not enough political clout — as the pretext, SBS is already in a cultural ghetto, and the message is clear: multi-cultural broadcasting is a hangover from the Whitlam era. It is a nice but rather silly idea we can do without in these tough, pragmatic days of economic realism. The implication of the recent government report on the ownership and control of commercial television is just the same. Market forces will take care of our television needs. Real men don't watch UHF.

Let no one be fooled by the idea of the SBS as an independent fiefdom within the ABC. The enthusiasm and commitment that make it unique could not survive being swallowed up by a burgeoning bureaucracy, even if the ABC were not to put the financial squeeze on its new lodger once we'd all got used to SBS being just another word for afternoon programming.

The SBS's real strengths lie in two main areas: multi-cultural broadcasting and news coverage. Its cultural programmes are unique in their range and, above all, their cohesion. This is especially true in the area of cinema — one in which the ABC quite manifestly doesn't have a policy, and in which the commercial networks think only in terms of blockbusters (for the ratings periods) and schedule-fillers (for the rest of the year).

But the absorption of the exemplary *SBS World News* into the muddled morass of the ABC would be the greatest loss of all. Free from the complacency of the Corporation and the news-as-commodity approach of the commercial channels, *World News* manages time and again to give a broad and balanced view of the world scene, despite being dependent on the same international news agencies and the same satellite feeds.

As TV news becomes more and more a matter of personality — economic policy equals 'Keating', the US equals 'Reagan' — and glorified gossip, the *SBS World News* is unique and wonderful: one of the glories of Australian broadcasting. In other words, it's too good to be true. After all, how could it survive a political climate in which a government spokesman, can say, apropos of the equally 'silly' question of uranium exports to France, that "principles have a limited utility value"?

If principles are to be measured against their 'utility' (which can be roughly translated as (a) generating profit, and (b) not causing political embarrassment), then the SBS is doomed. By any other standard, it ought to be a national treasure.

Nick Roddick



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People Power loses some of its bloom

Filipino film industry discontent at recent government moves



It is beginning to look as though the honeymoon situation which briefly existed between President Aquino's administration and the Philippine film industry — or at any rate the discommodated wing of it — may now be over. Two things seem to have brought disillusion to a head: the rejection of a set of carefully formulated proposals for a Film Commission and the appointment of the 52-year-old Jesus Alacran as Chairman of the country's film censoring body, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

It was, of course, clear from the early days of the revolution that there were not going to be radical changes in the film world. On 25 March, a month after Marcos's overthrow, President Aquino announced that he did not have any delusions, including — and especially — those relating to censorship. At the time it looked as if this might be an historic measure designed to stave the flood of attacks and pointed accusations which the uncertain month after Aquino's dissolution of the Bataan Peninsula (Japanese surrender) had brought.

Now, however, it looks as though the desire for conformity may go a little deeper. For the problems of the film industry are marginal as they might seem to an outsider. The cinema is a phenomenally popular pastime in the Philippines, attracting an attendance at around 1.6 million a day. Film is also one of the country's most highly taxed industries, making it an important source of government revenue. Thus, as noted earlier, 54 Tongson points out the problems of the film industry are the problems of many Filipino industries: the dominance of foreign firms, the authoritarianism of the past government, the suppression of people's rights. Clearly, the film industry is a micro-

cosm of the bigger reality that is our nation.

In an effort to sort out some of the basic problems, a group headed by Lino Brocka, Jose P. Lacaba and Aquino's Sons submitted a 10-page document to the Task Force on Cinema. They proposed changes on the setting up of a Film Commission to oversee control of the rules and standards governing film censorship, video regulation (as distinct from film censorship), film ratings. Brocka stated that his intention is to create more films and other issues at film culture, such as the Philippine Film Festival and the National Cinema Agency.

The proposals were very much in keeping with the spirit of the times, they would have resulted in a system of self-regulation by the Filipino film industry, rendering it largely independent of the government. The aim, says the document, because "experience has shown that state control and censorship are inimical to the growth and development of the cinema not only in art but also as a business venture." The proposals, however, seem to have fallen on studiously deaf ears.

In this context, the naming of the new chief censor is bound to be seen as significant. Since the NTRCB is effectively the film industry's main regulatory body, and the appointment of Alacran — an arch conservative in moral matters and as a member of Diosdado's much-vaunted youth corps — has not only sympathy with the notions of Catholic priggishness but also the Aquino administration — is not one designed to reassure the industry.

On last showings, it looks as though Manila's cinema are not going to be all that different from those of the, unfortunately dubbed Manila-Kingkong, head of the NTRCB's predecessor, the Board of Review for Motion Pictures and Television. Among Manila's first two

Filipino movies, *Succat*, "What film does not have the new censor's only stamp?"

score was an order for two cuts to be made in the music video for the enormously successful, popular song, *Hampag ng Pipino sa Manila*, which celebrated the February Revolution.

The cuts that were ordered were at scenes showing the US flag being burned and portraits of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos being repeatedly stamped by demonstrators after being removed from Malacanang. The cuts were ordered, says Brocka, because he wished to avoid divisiveness.

In a series of interviews published in the Manila press after his appointment, Marcos reportedly stated that he saw his role as being a guardian of the people's morals and decency. And indeed, one of his first moves as censor was against a Quezon cinema which had followed the previously standard (if illegal) practice of renting scenes out from a local pay-off core-party firm.

But a number of people, mostly the influential Concerned Artists of the Philippines, who were very active in the public demonstrations of January and February, are worried both by the expansion of film censorship from Marcos's NTRCB (which seems says Tongson to be made up of "people with no experience in film") and indications of what the CAP call a Marcosian tendency to alter and distort history in order to make a more palatable to the ruling elite.

Way back in the 1970s, when the CAP, as the Aquino government's progressive initiative, declared the CAP identity. But it was seriously damaged by the efforts of certain quarters to alter and suppress the freedom of expression which concerned artists fought and were empowered for during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.

Foreign classics or films in context?

New moves in the National Film Theatre debate

With the news announced elsewhere on these pages, that the AFI Awards are back in business, there are signs that some of the most intractable problems plaguing the theatre may be beginning to clear. One great, however, remains to be laid out by the National Film Theatre of Australia.

The NFTA was an enthusiastic body which flourished during the seventies, but which ran into financial difficulties at the end of the decade and was hindered even making and screening into AFI generalists by the Australian Film Commission in 1979. A version of the full story related both an allegedly period viewpoint by Bruce Paterson, co-director of the Council for the Establishment of a National Film Theatre, can be found in today's *Age* Money Review.

At the time of the takeover, a specific provision was made in the AFI's budget for NFTA activities. But the AFI's final season of operation was abandoned in favour of a National Screening Office. By 1982, the fund devoted to three or four week periods and the general provision had disappeared.

In the years since, Paterson has kept close the notion of a National Film Theatre with all the obsessive personal attention that has paid, partly by writing to papers and magazines (including this one) partly by organising NFTA-style events. The most recent of these — in Brisbane in August — was around 100 people and a weekend of screenings at the Queensland Institute of Technology which boasted British film from five countries spanning 80 years of international filmmaking.

The formula that of the early 1970s the Council is gradually to return to Australian film will increase the chance to see programmes on the right equipment, at the right time and at the right speed (just a necessary prerequisite for the appropriate music accompaniment) the best of world cinema. Paterson cites the Cinematheque Française (which since 1970 has been co-located on the July issues of *Cineaste* Pressing), the London National Film Theatre and the Museum of Modern Art in New York as role models. And he finds a shocking lack of historical perspective in the current AFI screening programmes which he says tend to be restricted to film noir, women in film and about other film topics. He also points out that they are restricted to the Channel Cinema in Footscray.

Clearly, there is a natural understanding to the long-term political and cultural of the nation, at the one hand foreign classics and on the



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Foreign classics or film in context? one'd

other, controversial programmes. Pettison believes that he has shown interest that there is an audience for this kind of programme. But much of the AFI's current programming (per faculty in Hobart) consists of no more than films that are already available through commercial distributors and above all the "the cause of serious film appreciation has apparently been lost."

Something that worked says Pettison, was dismantled by the bureaucrats and replaced by something that doesn't. The AFI's Executive Director, Vito Molloy, obviously disagrees. His points out, on the one hand, the video which the AFI offered with the NFTA and on the other the funding support for the screenings at the Chateau. "I'd say that audience base doubled over the past twelve months," he says.

She also points out the costs of mounting the kind of "fully imported" seasons that Pettison is after. Last year's Chinese and Soviet seasons required subsidies of \$100,000 and \$50,000 respectively. If it is agreed a question of costs, the AFI cannot afford to mount both the sort of screenings to which Molloy is committed and continue archival programmes. Such these considerations it is clear that the Institute has made its choice and is determined to continue to present deep cuts and unusual film.

The other target of Pettison is the AFI, which forced through the merger in the first place. Takes a more philosophical approach. A reform NFTA would say Cultural Activities spokesperson, Garry

Robinson, is a really talented idea. But it is again a question of money. It would take more than the Cultural Activities budget to fund an NFTA and with the AFI's goal of supporting Australian film culture, such an institution would be highly problematic. Says Robinson, it would take at least the current level of subsidies to provide for the AFI — upwards of \$600,000.

These mathematics have not been lost on Pettison. Following up last winter's campaign — the Age-Morning News article, the Institute's campaign, a newspaper reply to a letter to the Minister from Molloy in which he accused the AFI of "standing with their thumbs in the eyes to prevent the country being flooded with overseas and otherwise inaccessible film" — he is now taking his case to the Citizens.

Having obtained no pay out of Minister for Arts Barry Cohen (he is considering his intentions, says Garry), Robinson has requested a meeting with the Minister and is asking for the AFI to be removed from the issue entirely. His idea is nothing less than "the eradication of the AFI as a National Film Institute, converting its archival material in complete importing, microfilm, film and TV, making closed (project) systems, linking outside tapes and linking outside documentation and related activities."

The series of setbacks in the 1979 elections and the continued opposition of opinion on what sort of screenings ought to be provided make it clear that the work of the NFTA is not likely to go away. And assuming that the two leaders' committee is representative cross-section of Australia's serious (though public) it would be interesting to know what you think about it. Write in and let us tell it. (Editorial correspondence letters and a summary of the responses in the next issue).

Back on the air again

AFI Awards return to the ABC under independent producer Richard Sattler



After the last production of the AFI Awards in October, 1978 — a report (previously discussed by *Australian Film Institute* Director Vito Molloy in a letter last year) — it was some time before we were able to announce that the 1980 AFI Awards will indeed be broadcast on television.

Negotiations between the AFI and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (initiated with the announcement in early September that a new look awards concept would be produced from the Regent Hotel Ballroom in Sydney on the night of Friday 31 October, with special awards being presented from some of Australia's best movie film locations).

The programme will be hosted by independent producer Richard Sattler, in what is claimed to be the first time a producer has sold a fully independent live production of this nature to the ABC. Sattler, whose credits include *Melba*, *The Man With the Star*, *The 21st Birthday* and *The Year of the Horse* (which won a Best Film Award), which was filmed on the Ten Network on 14 September. The director will be Ben Price, also a *Man With the Star* alumni.

Looking back to its roots, AFI Awards format, the 1980 ceremony will take place in the context of an industry dinner for 600 people, either this as part of a three-day special of the kind assumed last year.

By the time most of us readers get this copy of *Cinema Papers*, the Awards will have been announced and the suspense will be over. But for the moment we are putting the nominations anyway. As predicted in our last issue, *Nicole* (a television film) has emerged as the clear favourite with eight nominations, including Best Film (Best

Film) *AFI* with the nominations: *Colin Firth* (nominated for Best Actor), *Best Supporting Actor* (nominated for Best Supporting Actor), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress).

Director (Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor) *Melba* (nominated for Best Actor), *Best Supporting Actor* (nominated for Best Supporting Actor), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress).

Other leading contenders are *The Man With the Star* (nominated for Best Actor), *Best Supporting Actor* (nominated for Best Supporting Actor), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress), *Best Supporting Actress* (nominated for Best Supporting Actress).

The 1980 AFI Awards nominations are as follows:
Best Film: *The Man With the Star* (produced by Ben Price), *Melba* (produced by Ben Price and David Farrow), *The Man With the Star* (produced by Ben Price and David Farrow), *The Man With the Star* (produced by Ben Price and David Farrow), *The Man With the Star* (produced by Ben Price and David Farrow), *The Man With the Star* (produced by Ben Price and David Farrow).

Best Actor: Bruce Swerford (*The Man With the Star*), Paul Cox (*Melba*), George C. Scott (*Best Supporting Actor*), and Peter Lee (*Best Supporting Actor*).

Best Actress: Helen Buday (*The Man With the Star*), Judy Davis (*Melba*), and Judy Davis (*Melba*).

Best Supporting Actor: John Meillon (*Melba*), John Meillon (*Melba*), and John Meillon (*Melba*).

Best Supporting Actress: John Meillon (*Melba*), John Meillon (*Melba*), and John Meillon (*Melba*).

Best Supporting Actress: John Meillon (*Melba*), John Meillon (*Melba*), and John Meillon (*Melba*).

NFTA operations centre the AFI Cinema Society (see August issue)



Filmways chief Mark Joseph dies

Mark Joseph, one of Australia's most respected film buyers, died suddenly on 5 August at the age of 71. He was joint managing director of Filmways Acquisition & Distribution (the firm he founded with Robert Christ).

Joachim suffered a heart attack on board a plane on his way to attend the 1988 Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association convention in Saratoga Springs.

Barbara Polard, Japtem originated in Australia 40 years ago, and made into a large home building company based in 1950 which was a major contributor to the reduction of the Melbourne housing shortage in the late 1950s in the 1960s and 1970s. It also assisted part of the 1960s housing boom and was part of the 1960s housing boom and was part of the 1960s housing boom and was part of the 1960s housing boom.

But it is for his colourful involvement in the Agribusiness firm industry that Jenkins will be remembered here and abroad. It was his entrepreneur's pioneering more than 25 years, and he was one of the first entrepreneurs to build a diverse empire in Australia, with the opening of the Darrell Hughes Develop in 1982. This rapidly developed into a major livestock division of the company.

leasts of the film industry. One of his major responsibilities was the successful challenge he instigated to the distribution monopoly long held near by the former empire.

It is perhaps fitting that he should have been an art connoisseur at the time of his death, since his regularly travelled to all parts of the world in search of fine painting. He was sentenced for his aggressive fire buying policy, backing his judgement with on-the-spot cash deposits for items he believed in. This resulted in handsome discounts for Fininvest and their customers, with him like *My Fair Lady* Miss Doolittle. The *Black Republic* said: "A. Scavone."

More recently, Joann had two tour dates in live production through his involvement in movie like *Country Music* Jean The Metal Country and Ringers.

Joann is married by his wife, Darin, and has two children, Daugherd Hunt Miller, wife of Future Pro-wrestler and actor Jason Miller is currently enjoying a successful career in the USA producing and directing film and has become job director Sam Joann Joann a sports specialist is now looking after

The Fimways group of companies will continue to operate though there may be some restructuring as a result of Japan's crisis. His unique presence though will be missed at the international firm markets he universally attended especially Germany where he celebrated his 70th birthday in 1985.

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■ **Australian Teachers of Media (ATMA)** have a unique philosophy when it comes to giving awards: they have five panels, one composed of media education and the industry representative, another of children under fifteen years of age. The end result is an accolade of quality produced for children and young adults. Small educational films and videos under 60 minutes are eligible to enter the awards, and the dateable is 31 October 1988. Forms are available from ATMA: PO Box 222, Carlton South 3053.

■ **Where did David Attenborough** find his first film? *Centre Asia* has been included in the historical footage shot at the International Festival of Asian Film Markets in Saint Malo, France. The producers want to Peter De Cource and David Moore for *The Northern* an episode from the *Horizon* and *Prime Wildlife* series. Filming has taken place in every state of Australia over a period of two years and the series has also been sent to television networks in their countries.

■ Another documentary series out of the *Play* Program, directed by Christopher McCullough, has created the international market as being screened across the US by the Public Broadcasting Service. The seven-hour series on the story of music and mankind was shown on the ABC in 1984.

■ Debates will be scheduled at the new Australian Screen Studies Association conference to be held in Sydney from 3-6 December at the 1988 Institute of Technology. The topic areas are Film Theory Re-examined, Documentary - Theory and Practice, and the State of Television Studies. Papers are welcome. For further details, contact Adrienne McDermott, PO Box 623, Chelmsford 2168, Ph: (065) 528 8226.

■ The 5th International Women's Film Festival will take place at the Moscov Arts in Central, Prague from 29 March to 5 April 1987. A retrospective of the work of Polish women directors from the last few years is planned and entries are invited for the three competitive sections, features, documentaries and shorts.

■ His those involved in this year's Australian Video Festival have a one-to-one to the festival. The 3rd Annual Festival of Independent Video in Scotland, UK, has become a popular event, everything from pop videos to agit prop and cabaret will be showing there from 21-23 November.

■ It is almost the second time in the Australian Film Institute and Pacific Regional (AFIPR). To emphasize the addition, the Radio

Training Line runs a 20-week commercial radio course, designed to provide for radio professionals and special training programmes for ethnic and Aboriginal broadcasters.

■ Three documentaries, a feature-a television and a miniseries have received support from the ABC Special Production Fund. *Delirium* (an quarantine war) to George Odgers, *Where the Dams* and *John Darling's Last Voyage* (a war) to a non-creditable investment. Another non-creditable investment was made in *Henry Cavendish's Alchemy*. The ABC invested in an episode of *Michael Le Mackinnon* and Larry Lucas's *Black Politics* series. *Getting Better* and *Production* and *Marketing* have been approved for *Barbara Lary's High Tide* and *Repetitive*. *Robert's Unfinished Business* is also being made.

■ Peter Page has been appointed as the ABC's National Distribution Manager. Based at the Sydney office, he will be coordinating the new distribution service, approved by the ABC in June after long discussions as to who should be the gap left by the Sydney Filmakers. Co-ops is likely to be underway in January 1987 and will operate from both the Melbourne and Sydney offices.

■ Don Spies, former *Lawrence* chief, will be handling distribution (until now) for the Australian company, Independent. This includes *Crane* (a film by Director Gene Scott) and Spies would head their US office in Los Angeles. He will be seeking co-production deals and organizing production and distribution for the Independent Group.

■ Teen movies are the go, according to recent statistics released by Vi Mergen & Co. Cinema is most popular with the fourteen-to-twenty-four old age group, who see films an average of ten times a year. And *My Sister Sam* is the most popular film of all the movies seen by the highest rate of repeat — 78%.

■ In a major move into the US market, Hoyts Corporation, US Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of the Cinema Centers Corporation (CCC) plans to enter the US market. CCC currently operates 115 screens throughout the north-eastern states and plan to add a further 120 screens over the next two years.

■ The Mitsubishi Corporation has teamed up with the Australian film and television distributor, All Media Enterprises, to distribute a distribution of the Corporation's interests and possibly a jointly owned to make foreign, to go, gathering all the historical data and on Japanese television.

Contributors

Sharon Buchanan is a writer and broadcaster on film.

John Becker is a film reviewer for *The Australian* and author of numerous books on the cinema.

Susan Birchall is a freelance journalist based in Melbourne.

Ben Branson writes regularly about film for the Los Angeles Times and is a published commentator for the *Washington Post* and other publications.

Barbara Caputo is a freelance writer on film.

Tony Carraway is a freelance script editor.

Leanne Coddin is a freelance journalist based in theatre, a contributor to *Play* and a film correspondent for the *Australian Film Guide*.

Mary Collett is a Sydney-based film reviewer, writer and editor.

Tony Croxall is a freelance writer on film who has played two theatre director's guide.

Pier Edmonstone is Deputy Director of the National Film & Sound Archive.

Dani Linder is editor of *Video Week*.

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Michael Freeman is a freelance film writer and editor of *Australian Film*.

Fred Harden is a film and television producer.

Paul Harris is a columnist of *Film Buff*, *Forecast* on *3RRR* and regular contributor to the *Age*.

John Hopper is a freelance writer on film and author of a forthcoming book on *Spinal Cinema*.

Garrison Kinsley is a journalist with *Media Australia*. He reported from *Delaware* and *Reynolds* for several publications in 1981 and 1982.

Paul Kohn is a journalist at *Video Week*.

David Komar is a freelance writer and producer of film and television in New Orleans.

Mike Kroll is a freelance writer and contributor to *Video Week*.

Robert Mayne works as an administrator for the French Commercial Office in Melbourne and as a freelance writer on film.

Paul O'Grady is a freelance writer on film.

Robert O'Grady is a journalist and contributor to *Video Week*.

Georgina Page and **Madie Voda** work at the Tokyo-based company *Gemma Film*.

William D. Rault is a film critic and reviewer.

Jim Schindler is a journalist at *The Age*.

Mark Sperry is a freelance writer on film.

R.J. Thompson teaches cinema studies at *La Trobe University*.

Edward Whelan is film critic for the *Perth* edition of *Daily Edition*.

The Editors with Tony Croxall

Briefly . . .

■ **PBS Productions** is making its base and moving to New York. The main production office will now be in New York with subsidiary offices in Los Angeles and Sydney, intending to make the US their production base. They have already signed *Glenn Edwards*, editor of *Life* magazine, to host a daily news television show.

Managing Director **Jane Delonell** will be producing products of the same and an "edited" about the same programme. Not all critics are, however, are not all critics are the problem of the Australian television industry. She is, however, a case of criticism about the film and video industry in this country.

She said changes to the 1984 television schedule and the marketing difficulty of making people watch films had provoked the situation.

While it is necessary to build up new networks, it is an industry problem, the television period could have been longer, she said.

PBS, Chairman **Lynton Taylor** also referred to disputes with the Australian Television Office, who have also received the deductibility to PBS, a parent company. **Kerry Perkin** is a Consolidated Press Holdings group, for investment in 1984, provided QFT have appeared twice against this ruling.

PBS has also refused the restrictions imposed by industry groups on foreign films. Taylor said that they may go to the office. Australian companies to produce film and television have for the traditional market. They will continue to produce locally as the opportunities arise and Delonell is ready to allow certain films.

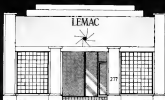
The issue needs to be dealt with seriously, she said. The fact is the Americans want to buy (and the fact is) have recognizable faces and they are not in the right position to support market. So Australian editors need more exposure. It would encourage increased employment opportunities.

Repeating arguments about foreign cultural domination are claimed. "I don't know how the Australian character could possibly be destroyed. It is too strong."

She identified co-productions as an important area of development and will be continuing to seek potential TV co-productions with overseas networks and production houses, some of which will be filmed in Australia.

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Cinema in the round

by Kathy Bail

Speaking after a screening of her film in Japan, Nadia Tass was asked: "Tell us how you managed to capture the Japanese spirit in *Mitsuko*." Expecting the audience to focus on the workings of the gaggers in the film (she was completely taken aback). Later, though, she recognized that, behind the open sarcasm, was the Japanese attitude: there is a sense of funny, diversion and a bustling humor — the sort of qualities that light the very best bits of comedy in the film.

For a director whose aim is to communicate across the lines of cultural difference, the trip was a small triumph. It also confirmed for Tass that not only was cinema the most effective way of reaching the masses, but that comedy was the genre in which to do it.

Born in a small Macedonian village where theater was the popular and systemic art form, Tass began acting in Russian and classical Greek plays. When she arrived in Australia she continued her education in drama, studying at the Moscow College of the Arts and acting and directing with various theatre companies.

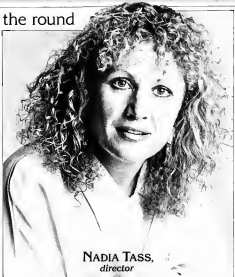
Her work brought together the values of two cultures — the Slavic and the Australian — and more broadly opened a means of exploring notions of cultural identity. Highlighting the image of Australian society as the melting pot and argues for a celebration of difference while emphasizing the human qualities we share.

For example, *Mitsuko* is set in an old Anglo-Saxon saloon where there are also different migrant and Russian and blocks of Housing Commission flats. And in the film Tass foregrounds the voices of the multicultural women. That is the way I give up, she comments, "and it is so rich!"

Although she hasn't abandoned the theatre entirely she feels that it is not the medium in which she can best reach social questions. "It is a big effort I can't be bothered with being too subtle." The theatre going crowd will see it play another 10, it is good to find a way to communicate with people who are used to being entertained by the box.

After six months of negotiating deals for *Mitsuko* in Europe and America, *Mitsuko* opened successfully in New York on 17 July; she is seduced by the possibilities of cinema, particularly its accessibility. *Entertainment* is a word that she mentions over and over again, and a disclaimer her attitude toward the role of the director. "If I become indulgent in my filmmaking I'd be left sitting alone in my language. Well I can do however it interests people who think that I can interest my own friends, what I really enjoy doing is comedy. It is fun, I don't want to be treated."

According to Tass, the issue of



NADIA TASS,
director

"What I really enjoy doing is comedy. It's fun. I don't want to be morbid"

good comedy is the presentation of fully rounded characters. People obviously identify with elements of Mitsuko's character — her voracious belly, for example. If you then place that sort of character in a situation which becomes unappealing, you create humor. In *Mitsuko* there is always a female and a male, a boss and a servant, but I try to reverse the roles and shift the character's status. And all (around) the other ingredients of that comedy must "work" not be dependent on specific Australian stereotypes.

Tass moved into the film industry very recently. On a trip up the coast to visit her husband, David Parker, a top Australian stills photographer who was then working on *Cotton* (and *Gold*) she met Colin Friess and

the three of them started talking about doing a feature. The result was *Mitsuko*, the script for which was actually written in the middle of the desert where Parker was taking shots for *Darkie* & White. It was his too that he directed many of the concepts for the story projects the feature in the film. Many long distance phone calls later they started shooting in Melbourne.

Parker has now completed the script for their feature feature *Race* and Friess in which Colin Friess will play the role of Peter. It is about a brother and sister who share a comfortable life in Melbourne for an adventure in the mining town of Alice. They are from a wealthy family and are both extremely privileged, but they are glad enough to meet

society's demands," says Tass.

As coproducers Tass and Parker keep a tight rein on the financial side of their productions. Like *Mitsuko*, *Race* and *Pete* is a low budget film and a long production period is scheduled to ensure that everything is ready when the cameras roll in January.

At this stage they are still paying up the trainee, and Tass is musing about starting writing screenplays of the script. Not only is the budget of Australian films becoming too heavy, but we are losing sight of the quality of the projects," she says. "I think you should be accountable as a filmmaker, but at the same time it is so heavily weighted on the financial side — the money people come first."

Speaking of money Tass has already had offers from American investors for *Race* and *Pete*. But there were a couple of problems. The Americans wanted to make the two central characters lovers rather than brother and sister and they wanted to turn Tass into the new women director who has battled the conservatism of the film industry. She is still a few steps ahead of them.

One man's war

by Damien Kingsbury

Salvador reviewed in *Cinema Papers* 18 (September 1983) without the copyist of a man and his companion into the hell of El Salvador during what could be described as the birth of its violence. It is based on the diary of journalist Howard Boyle (played in the film by James Woods), who co-edited the script, and it is extremely good fun and the true face of the period (1982).

The film's director, Oliver Stone, is like Boyle, adept at portraying life on the back. But Stone (best known for being writer *Midnight Express* leads to a political mess of the past — and the future — for the new movie to Richard Boyle. It is, he says, events as they occurred but seen through Boyle's eyes.

According to Stone, Boyle hated El Salvador seven years, establishing a relationship with a woman called Maria, her brother Carlos who was killed by the right-wing death squads, her two children and her mother. Boyle also apparently knew Ambassador White, various leading US military and CIA figures, and the Christian who wrote who was moved to El Salvador with them in 1982. Boyle and Stone were there when the books were dug up, and Stone includes the scene in the movie.

A reader (and is the brother of Jim Belushi) as the down and out did policy. It's Hook, who goes into El Salvador for the role. Hook was a friend of Boyle's — says Stone — and I'd known him for years. They were both broke, no event, no money going into the sunset. Hook considered all this time. He was a real pain in the ass on the road which was kind of funny.

There is in the film, says Stone, that dramatic balance: the General (Gerald McPhee) knows, between himself and calmly between horrifying violence and offense (outlook which is the way it is). I mean, put into genuinely heavy situations — not soldiers but journalists — tried to be very serious and — and — Stone also wanted something against the conventional gain in those types of movies where the journalist has to be paid and usually did (though a lot of those war junkies are really scared up people).

While Hook at the end — the excuse for verbal exchanges on the situation at a is happening — Boyle is the one hard the "vertical" as Stone puts it. On top of everything he would like to be a man you know, but I kind of like rats. (Boyle had wanted to play himself in Salvador, but was pushed out by James Woods when money became available.)

Money, a young heart, both Stone and Boyle with the latter always throwing my back, and the former collecting shooting a movie on the Mexican revolution in Argentina because of a couple of shots on Salvador in Mexico. He must enter the Boyle's a promise.

The journalist, according to Stone, is still a heavy father of the bottle. —

Boyle of war John Savage as Cassidy (left) and James Woods as Boyle in Salvador



OLIVER STONE,
writer and director

"On top of everything, Boyle sued me. He's a rat, you know, but I kind of like rats"



heavy father of dogs. He still does and he doesn't have a place to stay any more. He lives out of hotels and moves around. To white woods may have portrayed Boyle as being a bit better than he is — all actors want to be liked, you know — the movie is fully accurate in this respect.

One aspect of the movie that does not ring true is that of journalists but ring around during a battle, the few that ever see fighting probably look for cover if not they get killed. But Boyle says Stone once claimed to have run — as he does in the film — from one shooting site to the other during the Revolution. Paradoxical. I Journalist Journalist, with two men (James Woods and John Savage) running it while the soldiers.

Stone is a specialist. He's been killed in battle in El Salvador in 1982 and the photographer Cassidy played in the film by John Savage is according to the publicly national supposed to be the Hoang. But Stone concedes that their deaths were very different and that Cassidy's death was in fact closer to that of the American. Stone is like a man who was killed by Cassidy in the province of Santa Ana.

But it was to all events and purposes a symbolic war, come peace, a death. Surprisingly, although Kennedy also killing his own death in the film, Stone says he has never seen *The Battle of Chosin* in which an American commander killed himself being shot, as did American. He's in Saigon, but says: "Oh, yes? I would see that." He says: "I'd like to see that." But I'd like to see that.

Salvador has been compared with *First* (the 1982 film about Nicaragua, though much to Stone's chagrin). Under *First*, according to him, was about three people and their fucked up lives after showing life of Nicaragua in war with aid. And he regards Sydney Schwartz's book of the *Living Fields* as a war, although he does not mind comparing him as they are, being down between that movie and his.

Stone himself deeply dislikes *Platoon* style war movies or those where the hero kills the enemy (as Boyle did with the girl). To Stone, war — and he was wounded twice in Vietnam — is ugly, ugly and full of pain. The ending also shows that it is bloody, he says, that it is here in Salvador, nothing is resolved, no one is redeemed and Boyle loses the girl.

Stone's own film, though it is not as polished as *Platoon*, is encouraging people to believe that it is OK. And there will be no real, no polished violence in his next movie, *The Platoon* (based on the Vietnam war).

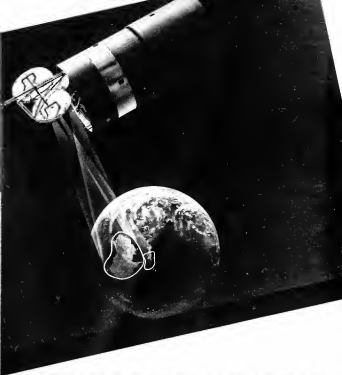
But for a man who admits to being fascinated by the experience of war, Stone does not want to be stereotyped as a maker of movies about its horrors. "It's more an evolution and I've moved a lot," he says. "I can see myself doing different movies. I'd like to do a dog picture. I'd like to do a love story. I'm not just obsessed with war. One grows in life, you know."



Boxing of the box: above left, Alan Bond; inside, right, Kevin Perry. Below: Robert Holmes & Court

In mid-August, the Department of Communications released its long-awaited report on ownership and control of Australian commercial television. Not surprisingly, it largely endorsed the existing set-up. But, asks Liz Foll, is that the only option? Does what the Department revealingly calls "the marketplace in ideas" have to be controlled by brewers, miners, textile manufacturers, multi-media magnates and American movie moguls? And should they be allowed to extend their range by broadcasting a satellite-delivered subscription-TV service to pubs and clubs without any Australian content regulations and any public licensing procedures?

BOX OF TRICKS



Radio this year, Alan Bond set off in search of an overseas production base. In a spectacular deal (see Nicola Robertson's UK column in *Cinema Papers* 34, July 1985), he bought the Screen Entertainment division of Britain's Thelma EMI, then sold it to the US Cannon Group in less than a week. This brought Bond a profit of \$100 million, secured him a seat on the Cannon board and allowed him to return home with the Australian rights to a library of 1,000 films.

Last year, another millionaire outsider from the west, Kevin Perry, also branched his base, acquiring part-ownership of the 7 Keys production house, and is now moving his television interests south from

Newcastle to Rockhampton and Papua New Guinea. There are also reports that he is buying a share in some US TV stations.

Contrary to broadcasting myth, most regional monopolies are not poverty-stricken companies struggling to survive: it is just that, in the past, they have failed to plough their profits back into the production of Australian programmes, preferring to rely on the networks. This will probably remain the situation for the next decade, since funds will have to go into broadcasting hardware. And the government's current deregulatory stance indicates no move to introduce local programme-content regulation.

But there is another, hidden agenda to this and other network expansions — one which clearly points to Labor politicians putting their trust in the metropolitan network owners. A private newsletter circulated to select members of the television industry several months ago argued that the Hawke strategists didn't care if the net-working of Sydney and Melbourne viewpoints into the regions spelled the end of local programming, especially news and current affairs.

There was, said the newsletter, no value to the Labor government in preserving these sorts of programmes, particularly its marginal Country Party electorate. Local

news programmes too highlight views which produce political discomfort, even a backlash, for politicians and bureaucrats in Canberra, especially if the angry farm lobby gets a chance to air its views. Not working in metropolitan areas and current affairs is thus far more palatable to a Labor Party which believes its main job is to manage metropolitan Australia, and in representing the 'lower common denominator'. Exposure of more parochial and more conservative language on regional television seems to me, it is argued, really in the party's interests. In the current climate, therefore, there is a definite political rationale behind the power of the networks.

FUTURE POLICY DIRECTIONS

The latest policy report from the Department of Communications, Ownership and Control of Commercial Enterprises *Future Policy Directions*, confirms this view, adopting a narrow framework of rules, deregulation policies, administrative arrangements and perceived political responses to address the crucial questions of ownership and control. When a man, the Department's thinking, the Forward Development Unit, has produced four different policy reports in its 'Future Direction' series in just over a year. And each report exhibits the terms of debate from what is clearly an industry perspective — industry, of course, being equated with 'consumers'.

One difficulty with addressing this perspective is that the Departmental reports credit no consideration of the political progress which forms the background to policy directions. Even more significant — if less surprising — is the absence of any discussion of the way in which the 'speciality of representation' (to borrow a phrase from Stuart Hall) works from the position of the public or, more precisely, the position of the Australian viewer.

Since 1983, the Labor government has developed a number of policy objectives for planning and extending commercial TV, one of which specifies the need for 'diversity of choice'. But what does this actually imply in the context of Australia's highly concentrated media-ownership structure, dominated as it is by four big metropolitan companies (John Fairfax, Herald and Weekly Times, News Corp and Consolidated Press), all of whom own major commercial network television stations?

In the latest report, diversity of choice is defined as meaning 'public access to a diversity of viewpoints'. The rhetoric is impressive, but the reality is somewhat different. Think for a moment of seeing a 'live' shot of Hawke walking to the Business Council on the West Network, a close-up of Hawke walking up the steps of Parliament House on Ten, and a 'documentary' clip of Hawke talking to schoolchildren on Seven. Does this coverage provide access to 'diversity'?

On all three networks there is, in things now stand, an endless repetition of news and views originating from powerful people in metropolitan Australia and overseas. Our windows on foreign policy often come courtesy of the US networks, complete with Defense Department film. And, in the broader cultural context, we have to read our differing needs into the glacial pace

of people in distant Dallas, with the occasional opportunity to glimpse an Australian landscape and hear an Australian accent. The narrow range of cultural product, with its predictable exclusion of certain views and its exclusion of others, is partly why network structures are so similar. And, under the present forms of monopolistic competition, what we are going to see is more of the same.

THREE NETWORKS

The changes that are going to be made to the ownership and control rules are designed to maintain the existing structure, and to provide all Australian viewers with a 'choice' of metropolitan network programmes. The new system will essentially allow all three networks to reach some 90% of Australian homes. National advertisers will then select from these similar sets of images and responses, packaged in order styles and formats, narratives and plots. Most television programmes will be scripted, staged, filmed and produced in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra (and, of course, Los Angeles), not in places like Broken Hill, Bendigo or Wollongong.

BOX OF TRICKS

There may even be a fourth network in the future, though the government has not officially spelled out this agenda. The reason for that is that another network depends, in part, on the success of a new US network (for example, Murdoch's Fox network), or a new 'player' with serious programme success securing a bigger audience/advertiser reach in Australia. Such a player will probably be an entrepreneur like Robert Holmes a Court, Alan Bond or Kevin Papp.

For the network solution to work successfully and 'openly', the government must deliver these 'new' stations in regional areas. With two structures in place, it will only be a short hop and a jump to extend the US networks via satellite across the Pacific, thus converting Australian network stations into multi-national ones.

There is, of course, no danger of economic as well as political centrality to national networking. The government needs commercial television up on the airfields if Austral is going to pay back its \$180 million debt. And the Big Four metropolitan network owners, combined the major advertiser/advertiser there, have the revenue to acquire the 'best' Australian and American programmes, and possess the capital resources to secure satellites as a means of distribution. In addition, all three networks have established or acquired interests in their own film and TV production facilities.

"The commercial television structure as it has been allowed to grow," says a 1984 Broadcasting Tribunal report, "is dominated by the six Sydney and Melbourne stations, which are owned by four com-

puter groups, cover 42% of the population, gross 54.1% of the revenue, spend 61.4% of the total programme expenditure, and supply 34.4% of programming throughout Australia". (The dominance of regional programmes includes a small proportion of local news and sport, plus packages of US and UK serials and old movies.)

The Tribunal goes on to suggest that the government instructs the industry to go to break the stranglehold of the Sydney/Melbourne stations. But the case — or, more precisely, the government — is not about to interfere and break up the monopolies of the Big Four multi-media corporations, as it has decided to re-structure differently, without upsetting the current structure. The plan is to build up the independent/advertiser reach of smaller metropolitan and regional owners, while providing the networks with two extra customers to purchase satellite-broadcast programme. Department of Communications bureaucrats have coined the term 'satellites' for this policy of metropolitan expansion into regional areas.

The reformation exercise has not, however, proved as easy as the government would have liked. Metropolitan owners like Holmes a Court and Bond are now co-opted, but there remains the difficult problem of restructuring the regional monopolists who still operate in one-state markets. Precisely how this will occur is still under discussion, though a provision in upcoming policy content for the *Control and Ownership* report. Certainly, the government is offering a number of financial carrots to encourage the new structure. Regional



owners, for example, must fork out a couple of million dollars to cover two extra distribution outlets (satellites) for the three network suppliers. So, in return, the government has promised all sorts of subsidies and tax concessions on the purchase of broadcasting hardware like transmitters.

More important for the wealthier regional companies and West Australian entrepreneurs like Holmes a Court and Wood is the government's offer to allow until TV companies to get bigger by acquiring extra stations and extending their audience share. Hence, the old 'two-station' ownership limit must be changed. Thus, in addition to the major acquisitions referred to at the start of this article, all sorts of companies have been buying up stations, shares and related product: the Lister textile group, the Westfield property

development group and the Grady's TV production company. In the Greater West, the Bendat family has acquired three stations in anticipation of the rule change.

A FREE MARKET

The political, economic and ideological aspects of networking and equalisation is the chief context for the Department of Communications' new report, and explains why Labor politicians and their friends in the network industry have defined the policy objective of diversity of chance for regional Australia in such a narrow way. In essence, the report is an attempt to clean up and rationalise some of the problems of implementing the network experiment and the proposed restructuring.

The present system of ownership regulation, says the report, was forged at a time when people believed television posed a threat to social and political life. The regulation often related to questions of 'political performance' in a narrow way of using political discourse, and the debate was generally dominated by emotion rather than reason.

A brief look at broadcasting history explains how the new rule changes are met, to use the words of the report's authors, 'a passion for the all-afflicting commercial television', and can do no more than place a few band-aids on the system. The foundations were laid in 1933, when R. G. Menzies backed away to the demands of the newspaper and radio proprietors and gave away the public airwaves, rather than following the UK model of forcing companies to reduce programmes.

This system is enshrined in a complex piece of legislation administered by the Broadcasting Tribunal, which has established complex regulations and ownership 'tests' over the years. It has proved a bannister for the legal profession, a headache for the Tribunal, a guideline for the multi-months companies and most regional monopolists, and is now a nuisance for a government intent on deregulation. The television owners maintain that their licences and the market in ideas are like any other piece of private property and are other market economy. They want the right to buy, sell and invest in this market without government interference (such as a limit on owning two stations, or capping a 'direct interest' at 5% of shares). That the stock exchange endorses this view is indicated by the fact that trade in media shares is one of the most profitable (and speculative) growth areas in the country.

The report's authors accept this industry perspective and treat television ownership as a business opportunity for those who can afford the price of the shares. In line with both Prime Minister Hawke and President Reagan's belief that less business regulation means more economic growth, the TV industry must, therefore, be free of restrictions. The authors borrow from the US in characterising this as a free-market approach to the industry, the new set of ownership rules must fit into the notion of a 'free marketplace in ideas'.



Above, the actress *ownship* in Queen Victoria, and, below, possibly the Queen's husband, Prince Albert. Below, the actress *ownship* in Queen Victoria, and, below, possibly the Queen's husband, Prince Albert.

As the report says: 'In 1988, there are increasing pressures for removal of artificial constraints on entry into the industry. As the birth of television in 1956, access to broadcasting (and communications) was regarded as a privilege — a form of patronage exercised by governments. It is now claimed as a matter of right.'

Over the years, politicians from the Liberal/Conservative and Labor parties have fiddled and tampered with the legislation to deal with political issues, to drive a wedge between those politicians and media owners, and to let the system. The history of Australian broadcasting is littered with examples: special newspaper trusts for Fairfax at the end-of-the-line, a prohibition on the ABC establishing a news service in the thirties because the newspaper proprietors feared the competition. The most recent fiasco was the 1991 'Mandovich incident', which removed the 'public interest' requirement so Mr Mandovich could appear on TV from Sydney into Melbourne, and changed the ownership criterion from residency to citizenship because Mandovich chose to live in Australia.

Now it is the Labor government's turn to fiddle with the ownership rules. The old principle of local ownership has eroded, the previously sacred rule prohibiting foreign ownership is under threat, and the Big Four companies have more power to wield, partly because there is no restriction on owning newspapers and radio and television stations in metropolitan areas, and partly because they have national reach.

OWNERSHIP

The Labor Party has already decided to remove the ban on owning two television licences, so it is now a question of tinkering with the rules. Should there be local or foreign or cross-media ownership? What should ownership involve? How should control of influence be interpreted?

The thorny area of foreign ownership is left unresolved in the report, it is clear that the authors owe decisions from the Federal Court and the Broadcasting Tribunal as to whether, as a foreigner, Mr Rupert Murdoch and his News Corporation are in a

Below, the actress *ownship* in Queen Victoria, and, below, possibly the Queen's husband, Prince Albert. Below, the actress *ownship* in Queen Victoria, and, below, possibly the Queen's husband, Prince Albert.



BOX OF TRICKS



position to control Network Ten stations in Australia. But one thing is clear at this stage: if the government or the Labor Party really cared about foreign control, they could have intervened at the recent Trivision inquiry in much the same way as did the Australian Journalists' Association and Artists' Equity.

In Murdoch's case, it is not just that he is a foreigner—he is also the owner of plenty of foreign cinema and television operations—the Twentieth Century-Fox studio and film library, the Fox television network and the Sky Channel network across Europe. And he is an enthusiast for 'global advertising'.

The authors of the report assert that "foreign ownership restrictions do not inhibit the transmission of foreign programmes and viewpoints". But, no doubt in anticipation of the government's response to the Murdoch dilemma, they fail to ask the reverse question of whether the removal of foreign ownership restrictions would seriously weaken the transmission of foreign programmes.

Unless national governments take a stand, the economic and ideological pressures exerted by large multinational companies to create global TV networks, global advertising and global film and TV products for multi-national audiences seem almost inevitable. As the report points out, the powerful industries in the USA certainly think there is a danger with foreign ownership, especially in wartime. That is why Murdoch had to become an American citizen to acquire his new TV network. But, if history teaches us any lessons, it is that the Australian government of the day is more likely to buckle to corporate pressure, and the new Keppel could well be seen as an indication of what staff at the ABC characterise as a 'pre-emptive buckle'.

On the question of local programmes, the authors adopt an approach which mirrors the foreign ownership argument, so that local ownership does not ensure local programmes. Since most stations are now owned by people who are situated in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth or the United States, that is basically a truism. It is something which has to do with the marketplace, and the government is evidently not going to disturb the operations of that marketplace.

The lack of any limit on cross-media ownership (TV, radio, newspapers), especially in metropolitan areas, does not sit unnoticed in the report, though newspapers appear to have been added in an afterthought, following a resolution at the 1986 ALP conference in Hobart: one major consultant to the report, Cooper & Lybrand,

provided figures on the cross-ownership of television and radio only, which show that nearly half the television owners hold interests in both media. The finding that the report's authors came up with on this question is fairly extraordinary: "Although there is substantial cross-media ownership in metropolitan areas," they say, "this is to some extent mitigated by the large number of radio and television stations and newspapers".

Writing a report from Canberra on cross problems in local knowledge of other areas. Obviously, the authors aren't familiar with Sydney, where the choice is between reading Murdoch and Fairfax newspapers in the morning and afternoon, switching on to Murdoch, Fairfax or Pecker TV at night, and seeking up Fairfax or Pecker radio and TV from midnight till dawn. Furthermore, all these media make extensive use of the news agency provided by AAP, which is partly owned by the Murdoch-Fairfax-Herald and Weekly Times companies.

The media power of the Big Four media conglomerates is evidenced by the poor, unutilised ABC hiring the services of top Fairfax journalists. Even ABC radio news regularly leaks off Pecker's prestigious Sunday TV programme. So much for diversity from the ABC. Indeed, Mr Pecker should not get lost in this equation, especially as he is using the same personalities on his TV Nine and CBC radio network, which span Sydney and Melbourne. When the radio ownership rules are dismantled he may, like Fairfax and Herald and Weekly Times, secure a national network.

WHO OWNS THE AIRWAVES?

But does it matter that those who control the marketplace in ideas live in foreign countries or metropolitan centres, having little relationship with the mass of the television audience, and none at all with the regional one? Does it make any difference whether we live in Sydney, Melbourne or Los Angeles? Should access to the airwaves only be a 'right' for those who controlled the largest capital resources? Does it make a difference if diversified conglomerates with interests in media and lawyers, or media and lawyers, merge their programme interests with the ownership of other goods and services?

The answer, of course, is that it does matter who owns our commercial television stations. Even from the merits frame of reference of offering a 'diversity of viewpoints', it matters how the audience relates

and responds to an owner's corporate interests and viewpoints, which are reproduced through managers, editors and the types of programmes offered.

Yet, in a rather peculiar fashion, the report's authors say they were asked to consider a "remarkable range of matters thought to be related to ownership and control" during the consultation process. Faced with this stage, their views of what was relevant seem to have been completely myopic. Among issues included as unrelated to ownership and control regulations are advertising and employment opportunities in ethnic, racial and other minorities (something which is covered by US regulations), Australian programme production (which is related to foreign ownership limits), employment in television and related industries like film and journalism (all regulations of one to this point), and ownership and control of other media and/or communication services (broadcasting, postal).

The government's lack of will to challenge the large power of capital is illustrated by the recent initiatives of Robert Holmes à Court and Alan Bond in establishing Club Superstation and the Sky Channel. These plans were nixed by the government after the two entrepreneurs had announced their intention of giving Asians some business, and no one questioned whether this type of subscription-TV was consistent with 'diversity', ownership policy, media concentration and the encouragement of Australian content. Indeed, even when the government discovered it was too late to stop these moves, it didn't bother to consult anyone representing Australian variety artists and musicians — the groups most likely to be displaced by TV in pubs and clubs.

The Australian production industry, Australian TV content quotas, and film and TV tax concessions were all created after an economic struggle on the part of producers, actors, writers and even local advertisers. The self-regulatory approach to the new 'quasi-broadcasting' area of pay-per-club TV services suggests that some of these victories may disappear.

As usual, Australian planners have looked to the US and its regulatory (and deregulatory) body, the Federal Communications Commission, to determine the problem of creative equity for both broadcasting and quasi-broadcasting communications arenas. They pose the question: "It is possible to devise an ownership and control policy flexible enough to cope with new technologies?" To this, they should have added "without offending powerful corporate interests". And the answer must be no.

ON SET WITH *Otello*

ACCORDING TO PLACIDO DOMINGO (WHO SHOULD KNOW), THERE IS AN OLD SPANISH PROVERB: NEVER TWO WITHOUT THREE. FRANCO

ZEFFIRELLI'S FILM OF VERDI'S *Otello* (IN WHICH DOMINGO PLAYS THE TITLE ROLE) IS THE THIRD MAJOR OPERA MOVIE OF THE PAST THREE YEARS, FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ZEFFIRELLI'S OWN *LA TRAVIATA* AND FRANCESCO ROSI'S *CARMEN*. DOMINGO WAS IN ALL THREE — AS ALFREDO IN *LA TRAVIATA*, AS DON JOSE IN *CARMEN*. TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE,

Otello IS THE THIRD OF ZEFFIRELLI'S 'SHAKESPEARE' FILMS — ANOTHER OF THE FORMS HE HAS TRANSFERRED FROM STAGE TO SCREEN — AFTER *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* IN 1966 AND *ROMEO AND JULIET* IN 1967. FOR THIS TRIPLE ALLIANCE OF CLASSIC DRAMA, ROMANTIC OPERA AND CINEMA D'AUTEUR, *DEBORAH BEER* TOOK THE PICTURES, AND *GIDEON RACHMANN* TALKED TO THE DIRECTOR AND THE STAR.



Placido Domingo (*Otello*) and Renée Armand (*Desdemona*)



Franco Zeffirelli:

THE TRAGEDY OF A CERTAIN AGE

What is special about Othello? What makes it different from all your other work?

I'm very lucky. Before deciding to do anything, especially a movie, I have to find out, to be sure, that it's the right thing for me — that, at this moment of my life, of my career, that is the project I must do.

Why is that?

Because, otherwise, I don't get involved. If I'm not fully convinced that the film I'm making is the right film for me, I don't come up with anything. Actually, I don't even do it. With all the films I've done before, I've always found out first that they were right for me at that moment. They may not have been right for the audience — although, so far, it's proved that they were right for the audience, too.

Why Othello at this point of your life?

Well, first of all, Othello is a tragedy of maturity: it isn't Romeo and Juliet. When I did Romeo and Juliet, I was much younger and I believed in juvenile love. Now, I'm much more inclined to analyze the tragedy that love can bring to people's lives when they're no longer young and they don't believe in pure love. Later in life, love becomes something much more complex, not just "I love you", "You love me".

"Let's love." In maturity, love has to be the total involvement of a person, of a personality. That's the tragedy of Othello, because he is young and she loves in a young way. He loves in a mature way. That's why he's so vulnerable: because he cannot believe his luck! And it's enough that a monster like Iago injects a little bit of doubt and suspicion in his mind for the whole edifice to break up. He's a mature man who has been blessed by life, and he cannot believe his luck.

Are you saying that because you yourself are of a certain age?

Well, let's put it that way: because I am of a certain age, I can understand the problems of people of that certain age! I was not ready for Othello when I did Romeo and Juliet. In fact, one of the few films in my career was in Stamford-upon-Avon, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, in 1961, when I did Othello with John Gielgud. The year

before, I had had a tremendous success with Romeo and Juliet at the Old Vic, but Othello did not work because I had nothing to do with the problem of age and so on. Now, I understand things better.

Do you think that, in old age, we become more vulnerable?

Yes, you become more vulnerable when you try to do things that belong to youth, if you try to compete with youth, to rediscover the passions of youth, then you are in trouble. You have to live and love as an adult.

So Othello is old age without maturity?

No, this is maturity without youth. His involvement is so complete, so young and so total that he cannot control it, he cannot find the right balance.

But does the story have a meaning for now, in terms of how we mature in the industrial era?

You know, man can progress, can go to the moon, go to Jupiter — he can do anything in terms of technological progress, scientific progress, whatever you want, but man remains exactly what he has been for our thousand years. We laugh and cry for the same reasons that the ancient Egyptians loved and laughed and cried. Man has not changed, he has not had the opportunity of changing. And the nature of human beings has not changed, cannot change: it would take thousands and thousands and thousands of years before something reacted. We are still primitive. We will cry if our lover leaves us, we still laugh at the same old jokes. And we still hope in terms of the eternal conflict between good and evil. This is the essence of man. So, whatever progress you see around us doesn't mean anything to us as human beings. We are so capable of jealousy, hatred, hope and despair as, 300 years ago, was Othello.

But the problem is, it's a very special relationship between Desdemona and Othello. It's not a common relationship: you start with something very special — a dark, black man with a young, white, Venetian girl of noble origins. So, right at the start, there is a strange situation, and you have to find the right balance. Any error that happens in a situation as special as that is bound to be a total disaster.





Plácido Domingo:

REFLECTIONS IN A LITTLE EYE



How important is singing for you?

Singing it, for me, almost my whole life, part of my being — something which I don't think I can, for the moment, live or function without. Of course, there will come a day when I won't be able to sing, just like you get used to walking slower when you get older, to running less. So, one day I won't be able to sing, and I will accept it. But, for the moment, it is part of my life, and very much so.

When you say "a part of my life," does that mean that other things are more important?

What I do with that voice, that's a different thing. Most of my life, I have been raised for what I consider is a very good reason: to make the public happy, to make them attend a performance in peace, to really transmit their feelings. And I think there is a lot more you can do with a voice, with a career, with your entire life. You can also use it to help people. And then, the bringing of peace and happiness — simply bringing that to people — is not enough today. I think I have realized that. You can bring almost everything to people: you can bring not only visual happiness, you know, but also happiness. You can help them to understand their lives, to rebuild their emotions. I am trying to do as much as I can, for the moment specifically for Mexico after the earthquake, but later on for other places.

Do you feel that Gable has a bearing, or a direct map, on that?

Well, I think that this is a film that is going to appeal to the public in general, not just to music lovers. It has all the essence of a film, combined with the best you can get in opera, because Gable is one of the most popular and best loved operas, and it also has Shakespeare. Frangipani is a wizard at combining these three things. I believe that, if people go to any kind of show, they are there with just one thing in mind: to participate, to live that story for those moments. So, naturally, the more the performers have, they don't have any other idea in mind: they are just enjoying it. And, if they are happy with what they have seen, then they leave the movie house or the theatre with something that lasts longer in their souls. And that could be a help, also.

at least, we get a lot of letters expressing that feeling.

Do you feel that the fact that a lot of people come to see a film — more than would normally go to the theatre or opera — is an important reason for transferring opera to film?

Definitely. I believe there is a new public, a fresh, young public, because of the opera movies that we have done. There is the public that cannot afford to go to the theatre, but there is another kind of public: the public that, for one reason or another, has not been interested in opera. It is easier for them, one afternoon or evening, with out having to get dressed up, without having to make preparations, just to walk to the corner and go and see a film. Maybe that moment opens a new experience for them.

You don't feel that there is a major difference in the way the work is presented?

The stage has its excitement of the moment of truth and all the risks of performance. The theatre will live forever because the public will and want to have that feeling: they want to see this live danger-moment. On the other hand, with all the work on a film, it is a well, a serenity that we leave of our problems, of our careers for the future, you know. For people I love more or less for way we were on the stage.

The two worlds are dramatically opposed. On the stage, you are living the life of the character very intensely for those hours, three hours and a half, and then it is finished. In the movie, you are also living intensely, but you are dealing with days and days and months and months of work. Here, everything is elaborated little by little, little by little, and only later on we see the results: it's in the hands of the director and the editor. It's very careful, the camera, but it sees everything. You cannot lie to the camera: it sees a movement that is false, it sees your eyes, it sees inside your soul. In the theatre, it is only at that moment that the emotions are living, and you are able to have this magic communion for a minute or two minutes. You will live it and it will live always in your mind. But that's it: you cannot repeat it. In the movie, when you have something, then it's the truth.

Does that mean that you can lie in the opera house?

It's not exactly that you can lie, but the emotions have to be absolutely truthful and real for the camera. For me, it is easier to be truthful on the stage, because it is my territory. I have been there all my life. For the camera, everything has to be imagined. And maybe your feelings are not that easy to express if you are used to doing it in a bigger way for two, four, five, maybe twenty-five thousand people in Verona. I think both are true, but it's more difficult to be truthful for the little eye — the eye of the camera.

What about your relationship to yourself while you are performing, when there is nobody present except that blood film crew who've seen it all 20,000 times?

Well, you just have to have the feeling that it is the first time. Every time you repeat a scene, you just cannot afford to say: Oh, so, I've done this three or four times already. Now I can take it easy!

Working with Zeffirelli on an opera as a stage and on an opera as film must be very different.

My connection with Franco has been great, both in the cinema and in the theatre. We understand each other perfectly. But as the musicians, the only one that could really make both things go together. You were asking me before, what do you consider yourself? (Is he a singer or an actor?) I think basically you can talk about interpretation, which takes everything together: singing, acting, feeling, everything. We are trying to live the character in a very real, very Shakespearean way. As they say, there is never two without three. Franco has made two great films from Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*. I believe Gable is the third.

More Shakespeare than Verdi?

I tell you one thing: when you've heard Verdi, then you hear only Shakespeare, you wonder, Where is Verdi? The music has made the drama so strong. For me, Shakespeare is in Verdi. But, when I see simply Shakespeare, I miss Verdi.

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YESTERDAY'S



Left, 1954 Antiquesmen at Auction, ACT. Above, Louphard's The Woman Suffrage (1916), a major find of The Last Film Search and the Archive's next major project. Right, John La Voie and Annabel Blackford in Franklin Brown's The Breaking of the Ungeared (1914)

WITNESS

Over the years, *Cinema Papers* has been host to quite a few articles arguing the need for a National Film Archive. Now, of course, there is one, and it's already two years old. But is it doing what it set out to do? *Ray Edmonds*, Deputy Director of the Archive, reckons — with some reservations — that it is.



Antecedents are arbitrary but important — a reminder of the passage of time, a means to put things in perspective and a tool to ask questions. This is, moreover, as true of cinema as of literature as it is of individuals.

By comparison with the country, approaching its Bicentennial, Australia's National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) is but a strapping on 3 October, it celebrated the second anniversary of the spectacular opening of its Canberra headquarters by Bob Hawke, a mere seven months after the announcement by Arts, Heritage and Environment Minister Barry Cohen that the new institution had been created.

It is an institution of great expectations. Both Ministers reflected widely-held sentiments in their speeches, setting forth a grand vision of the Archive's purpose and future stance: it was, above all, a declaration of the social and historical importance of the screen and sound media to Australians, and of the necessity for a distinct institution to embody that heritage and provide for its preservation and permanent accessibility.

The creation of the NFSA itself initially involved the separation of its components from the National Library of Australia) was the outcome of a historical process which has been partly documented in *Cinema Papers* and elsewhere — a remarkable story, eloquent with the concerns and affections Australians bear for their screen and sound heritage, and consonant with the fact that country was one of the first formally to provide for the preservation of that heritage, by establishing the National Historical Film and Sound Library (attached to the then Commonwealth National Library) 30 years ago.

When it first came into being, the NFSA inherited not only collections, but also responsibilities and problems. These included a vast backlog of cataloguing, the organisation of collections and preservation work, which were the legacy of decades of material stuffing and flooding. There was also a rapidly rising level of demand for access to the collections, which had long since become impossible to meet. So, there were unrealistic expectations that the new institution was going to change all that in short order. These turned, inevitably, to disillusionment when a *de facto* appraisal that the timescale was going to take time, despite a (perceptible) rejection by the government of additional staff and funds.

The Archive had an identity, but its physical, philosophical and administrative framework had to be established. Premier —





had to be found, collections and people moved, buildings and equipment built up. Above all, long-delayed policy questions had to be addressed, so that the Archive could develop on a solid footing.

The NFSA was, from the outset, a going concern, rather than a new body starting from scratch, which might have had the leisure to take a more studied approach to such matters. To tackle policy, legislative, administrative and forward-planning issues, the government set up an NFSA Advisory Committee, twelve-strong and chaired by producer Joan Long. The Committee was aware that its report would not only stand as the NFSA's foundation document, but that it would also have to be a credible document, which would be analysed locally and internationally.

What emerged was a colorful, illustrated book, sent to Her Majesty's Stationery Office in October 1984, from the NFSA, GPO Box 3801, Canberra 2601. 350 plus 31.50 pages, which was launched by Barry Cohen and November to an excellent public response, and which has since had wide-ranging local circulation. Its recommendations are far-reaching, and are presently being considered by the government (although any definite response may not occur until the current review of museums and collecting institutions is completed).

Providentially, premises for the NFSA were quickly found, through the good offices of Barry Cohen, his colleague, Neil Brown, and the Prime Minister. The old Australian Institute of Anatomy, largely located between the orbit of Canberra and the university, was to be rescued, and the building became the Archive's headquarters. An architectural gem on the National Game register, it included a theatre, library, exhibition halls, storage and office space — and lined for expansion. It is visually impressive (especially since its refurbishment has restored its character to its original glory) and rapidly gave the Archive its own physical identity.

One of the first areas to receive attention was the storage of collections. There was particular need for a consolidated facility that was adequate for the special requirements of films, videotapes and sound carriers. Lacking this in the past, collections had become increasingly scattered (as they still are) over several locations in Canberra and Sydney. And, in some cases, the storage conditions were seriously deficient. The government's decision primarily to remove NFSA materials from the National Library was soon underlined by the aftermath of the Library fire.

The Archive's collections contain more

than a million items, and the solution to their storage involved three buildings. Access copies would be located near client services in the headquarters. Preservation and backlogged materials would be housed in a new facility in the Canberra suburb of Mitchell, adapted to provide the necessary range of temperature and humidity controls. The entire film stock at Mitchell, taken over from the Library, would be expanded and upgraded to house all the inflexible film. The National Capital Development Commission and the Department of Housing and Construction will complete their work in 1987, making it possible for the first time to house the whole national collection in an appropriate environment.

Technical facilities were also an urgent concern. In 1984, the NFSA's professional video facility comprised two secondhand quad playback machines which, in the absence of the space or staff to operate it, had never been installed. Now, a purpose-built video reconstruction, complete and reliable video laboratory, which can deal with 2", 1" and the smaller video formats and which will, ideally, be able to handle film-to-video transfers. Next year will see a start made on new audio dubbing units and a unique film reproduction laboratory. These are dramatic advances, even if they are simply the fundamental tools necessary for a media archive to operate effectively, and to maintain reasonable preservation and access standards.

The tragically Canberra-centred operations of the NFSA have been supplemented by regional offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The presence is, as yet, minimal. But it's there, and paying dividends in making acquisitions easier and providing some alternatives to the national link to Canberra for Archive clients. In time, the regional offices will hold their own ready-made collections, and be answerable to the central Canberra being built in Canberra.

So far, so good. Shouldn't all this progress result in dramatic improvements in access and service? The answer is a qualified yes — yes, that is, in proportion to the degree of growth, and not necessarily immediately. Such a guarded answer needs to be underpinned against the complex dilemma set out in *Time in Our Hands* regarding the preservation and acquisition requirements of so acceptable volume, and giving even half the total collection catalogued and readily accessible, will take years of work and require dramatically increased resources. And it is a progressive task: specialised expertise and facilities



Left, a scene for Ken G. Hall's astonishingly dramatic The Silence of Dean Maitland (1934). Top left, the NFSA's headquarters, Time in Our Hands. Above, the wedding party of Anne St. John's sister in Dad and Dave Come to Town (1935), the third in the series.



have to be grown — they can't be created overnight, no matter how much money is made available.

What is more, the NFSA has, like everyone else, to live within the realities of tough times and government spending restrictions. So, the Archive has to seek the best value for money from the best management of its work. For instance, thestrate-copying programme won't, in future, be coloured simply by aggregate findings, but by what is copied when, and how well. The Archive has gained agreement for a special scan, engaged under the CIP programme, to supplement its preservation staff and spend nine months age-testing the negative collection, to determine the life expectancy of every reel. Then a computer system, rather than educated guesswork, can determine the copying priorities. The film preservation laboratory will significantly improve the quality of the copies.

Along with the lifting of access restrictions and an improvement in services, has come the introduction of service fees. While this is consistent with overseas practice, it is new here, and the principle of free public access to the national heritage has had to be carefully weighed against the reality of providing an expensive and labour-intensive service. In a marketplace world, if the nation, it seems obvious, should everyone pay the same, or should there be different fees according to a person's ability to pay? As it is, a standard fee for all users has been set, but the Archive may vary this according to content procedures. For instance, some clients may be able to negotiate a "quid pro quo", in the form of research information or collection material.

The Archive has been able to negotiate deposit and loan agreements with the Australian Film Commission, and with industry associations such as the Video Industry Distribution Association and the Australian Record Industry Association. These have begun to mitigate the traditional hit-and-miss approach of past acquisition practices. Most of the major and independent film distributors now give the Archive advance warning of material destined, so that overseas and Australian problems can be given the benefit of transferring prints sought by the NFSA.

With the introduction of public exhibitions, a schools education programme and its use by outside bodies, the NFSA building is now part of the Canberra tourist circuit and can receive hundreds of visitors in a single day. Publications and other items are on sale in the Archive shop, and the NFSA will be developing its marketing

capacity, as well as seeking more corporate sponsorship.

Does that mean that it's "selling off the farm" — as one journalist put it — or compromising its integrity? By definition, as a public institution subject to legal constraints, it can't do the former. Nor can it afford to sell its most precious asset — its integrity — to the highest bidder. The matter need be far less the Archive has a sponsorship policy and guidelines against which it judges proposals, and against which the net benefit to Archive and sponsor are assessed. Some proposals have been turned down, others sought and accepted.

For myself, I find something extremely healthy about seeking the sponsorship dollar: it's hard work, and perceptions about the value of money are totally absorbed in reality. Perhaps the best current example of a sponsored project is the "Last Film Search". Without the considerable financial input of Kodak, the USA Foundation and others, it would never have happened, and our film history would be considerably poorer.

To sum up, over time in particular it refines my personal framework for judging the progress of the NFSA over the last couple of years. In April, it hosted the 42nd annual congress of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAPF). It did so very successfully, with an excellent overseas attendance. But the congress differed from its 41 predecessors in two significant ways. It was the first ever held in the southern hemisphere. And it was the first ever hosted by such a young organisation. That the delegates came so far — indeed, that the congress was held here at all — was a compliment to the NFSA and to Australia. It was evident that the delegates were impressed in much by their Australian colleagues, whom most had met for the first time, as by the progress made by the NFSA in so short a time. And we gradually realised that, in some respects, the Australians now had more to teach than to learn. It was a far cry from the time, not so long ago, when these few Australians who could converse in such a European or American archive felt either like observers from the proverbial banana republic.

Above, Aud (D'Mohoney) with Patsy Ann (Judy) in the American-Australian co-production. The Kingston Hall (right) during the Melbourne season. Peter John, Thana With Love (1980) (a three-minute segment was recently restored by the Archive from a private collection). Below, The Last Film Search on the road in Queensland.



BILL BENNETT

More chick for your buck: actor Bill Bennett



CRISTIAN GUTIERREZ

RISKY BUSINESS

The very independent Australian filmmaker Bill Bennett has nearly completed his third feature, *Dear Cardholder*, while his second, *Backlash*, has just been released. Kathy Bail talked to him about risks, responsibility and the fine art of shooting without a script.



Rough justice: David Argue in Trevor Darling in *Backlash*

One has been repressed in each of Bill Bennett's feature films. A character says "You have to do this — they're the ruler!" and another retorts "I don't care!" The stories Bennett tells are about bucking the system and the struggles need to do so are so far removed from his own patch of strife: His way is the adversarial one, low budget, small, committed crew, technical improvisation, and tight reign on the filmmaking process. Bennett is a producer, director, writer.

His forerunner necessity is a Ronald Reagan portrait: He likes to confront people, he says with a hunkin' grin. And, in his first two features, *A Street to Die* (1983) and *Backlash* (1986), he has done exactly that. *A Street* is the recently took out the Crucial Globe (Best Feature Film) and the Critics' Prize at the Karlovy Vary Festival in Czechoslovakia. *Backlash* was selected for the '86 Cannes Festival; screen at the Cannes Film Festival two years and also screened at Montreal. Surprisingly, though, the films have not received the same level of recognition in Australia. While Chris Haywood was awarded Best Actor for his lead role in *A Street to Die* at the 1983 AFI Awards, the premiere of *Backlash* from this year's nominations has led some to question the awards system.

A Street to Die is a dramatization of the tragic life of Colin Simpson (Chris Haywood), the first Vietnam veteran to win compensation for injuries caused through exposure to the deadly chemical, Agent Orange. Using conventional narrative, Bennett produces a powerful exposé, affirming his belief in film as a social medium.

In *Backlash*, he embraces another contemporary concern, questioning the legal system and how it functions, in particular, Aboriginal people. Two police constables (David Argue and Glynis Miller), who his been charged with murder, to her home away. His sons, they become stranded on a derelict sheep station, where different rules come into play.

"These films are really made out of a lot of anger," says Bennett, "but that anger is tempered through humor. It is so much that I saw Chris Haywood and David Argue to play the leads, because they bring a leech to what are extremely heavy subjects."

Similarly with Bennett's third feature, *Dear Cardholder*, now in post-production. Robin Hemmery is Mrs. Harris, a station clerk who loses her job and gets caught in an after-Asian-type scenario which he is forced to apply for more and more credit cards to pay his debts. Bennett's wife, Jennifer Cluff, plays the death-anxious character, Aggie, a rebel poetry-farmer whose life makes it the tax department, where the left loose reign of chaos to pay her taxes in kind. The film is about "small people" who have been stepped on by bureaucracy, and it follows the fallen very funny ways the two characters and Mr.'s precocious daughter, Jo (Miriam Chapman), turn up and take on the system.

The story independence expressed in the film is characteristic of Bennett, the producer, who has raised the banner for his features by himself and without the assistance of government film bodies. He admitted, he admits, is one of carpentering. For *A Street to Die*, he flew to Mackay, looked through the phone-book and phoned every accountant and solicitor in the area, informing them that he was

seeking employment for a firm. He then continued to hand out brochures in small towns from Mackay to Port Douglas. Bennett claims that the combined budget of his three features is less than \$1 million, and he feels that, if good quality films can be made on low budgets, then tax incentives are not, by and large, necessary.

"I just see a lot of people getting very far on NAB and still not making good films. It is very damaging to the industry," he says. "One of the advantages of making money the way I do is that I personally know just about every intention, which gives me a very strong sense of responsibility. This is where the marketing and distribution come into it, too. If you know what the investment means then, for me, it is impossible just to walk away once the film is finished. These people put money into the film because they trusted me, and the point is that a lot of them trusted me. That makes me feel that I'm doing something right!"

At 33, Bennett's story is that of the mid-made man. He has incredible drive and a quiet assurance about going it alone. And, while filmmaking to others seems to be about compromise, he is continuously marking the point at which you cannot give in, a quiet evidence in his sensitivity to the call of communication.

A Street to Die, for example, maintains a very consistent shooting style, built up by a series of one-shot scenes. What was important, Bennett explains, was that "the scenes had a natural rhythm, a pace. I didn't want to convince that in editing. It meant, though, that the document made on location was the same that you were looking into. There was no reason later on if those decisions were incorrect."

In *Street*, I didn't want the camera to lapse. I wanted it to stay back and be an observer. I didn't want the camera to be making sympathy from the events, because I felt that they were strong enough and that, if the camera was "objective", the audience would then step into the frame and, I guess, sympathize."

"Acting was a very mysterious process to me"

Bennett will, however, be able to play on the emotional interest in more subjective cinema with a second in *Dear Cardholder* where the 40 women are women to cover a violent confrontation at Aggie's farm. There is a further element of irony here because of Bennett's own career as a television reporter.

After finishing a medical degree, he started working as a credit journalist at the ABC. Kopp to make a film about the swimmers. Steve Rothford, he convinced the news editor to let him do it. "That was my first experience, really," Bennett jokes. "And I was hooked from that time on!" Reports for *The Day Tonight*, *A Big Country and Wildlife* followed. In 1979, he was awarded a Logan for a report on an illegal street march in Brisbane and the treatment of the demonstrators by the Queensland police. Another acclaimed story was a 30-minute documentary on the search for a rogue crocodile in the Northern Territory.

Ultimately, though, he found the experience of television journalism frustrating. "I tried to do stories that were going to do

BILL BENNETT



some good," he says, "and often that was in conflict with what the programme required. The producers wanted light entertainment, and what the stories were saying was incidental to that. Basically, I got out of it because I thought it was a let-off."

It was during this period that Bennett had a near-fatal car crash. After three months in hospital with a broken back, he began working as an independent producer/director. He made a five-part documentary called *Cathy May* (1981), which was backed by Dick Smith, and another about a 66-year-old sailor whose boat was caught in a cyclone during a storm-headed yacht race from New Zealand to Australia. The film, *Shipwrecked*, won the GUD Award for Best Documentary at the 1984 Sydney Film Festival.

Some of the techniques Bennett developed while making documentaries he has brought to his feature productions, particularly the flexibility of working with small crews and, rather unusually, small cameras. Each of his features has been shot on Super-16 and finished on 35mm. "There are real advantages to using a small camera," he says. "You can work quickly and there is also a psychological aspect; people are less inhibited and more likely to

Live action: Robin Arnott (left) and Jennifer Giff (right) on the set of Dear Godfather



take risks. The transfer is almost instantaneous, although at times I really miss that grating suspense — the quality of deflection — that only a French cinema can get. But, for the rest of work I'm doing at the moment, it is absolutely ideal."

In documentary making, Bennett was frustrated by the lack of "control" over characters and events. There were three actors in *Cathy King* and, he says, it was difficult getting "performers" out of the other participants. He was writing several scripts for feature, but admits to having had a few of actors and acting techniques.

"It was a very mysterious process to me," he says. "Two years ago, I did acting classes with Rene Lyons and studied different techniques and approaches. I came to realize that acting is, in many ways, a scientific process, a technical process, just like changing a lens or using a different microphone. I found that it helped my writing enormously, because the direct actor response is often the detail that makes a scene really live, giving a hint for the whole film."

Personally, it is in his approach to acting that Bennett has taken the most risks. With *Deadlock*, he wanted to make a film that worked primarily on dramatic structure and used totally unproven dialogue. It was new territory for him — and for Australian cinema.

Working from a 27-page scene breakdown, he began shooting without any

dreaming dollars. Robin Kennedy as the Hawk, an assassin for Dear Carolholder.

formal rehearsal of dialogue. The camera was then crucial — but in Agnes, Carole and Miller, he found actors who seemed to delight in the freedom this approach offered. Some critics have noted that it is, in fact, in the scenes involving actors other than the principals that the film fails. But, generally, the performance of the leads are dynamic, creating an elegance and suspense in the desolate subtext acting.

Although there has been some improvisation in *Dear Carolholder*, Bennett is working with a finished script. One notes, however that under his direction there will always be openings where something strange might bubble up. On the set, a few chickens found their way onto the mainstage in Agnes's lounge room, and not happily to disrupt the ribbons and trappings, much to the set director's delight.

"The script is changing a little," says Bennett. "It doesn't work as we're shooting, in a rehearsal prior to that, I'll reverse them. But there's no going to be that much improvisation. This is a very different film to *Deadlock* — I guess I'm just exploring different styles."

Bennett wrote the first outline for *Carolholder* four years ago. But, for him, the writing of the screenplay is the end of a long process of preparation. "I work out roughly what the story is about," he says. "I decide on the characters and then I dramatically sketch the film. I get a few pieces of paper and mark what happens in various points. Once I've got that structure, I do a 40-45 page treatment — a scene by scene breakdown. It doesn't have dialogue, only indeed speech. This is the key working document, and I'll reuse it over and over again until I'm happy with what the characters are doing in action rather than through dialogue. The actual writing of the screenplay is normally quite fast."

"You can get away with murder, technically, if what's happening in the scene is true"

The period Bennett spent studying acting was crucial, he believes, in learning how to focalize characters. Like an actor, he works through the character's background, assessing details about their life, 85% of which may never appear in the script. Even for small parts, he gives the actors a life outside the screen life. Having written the material himself, he also feels more able to engage the actors and establish their trust.

He certainly agrees that it is vital to give actors direction — to allow them to arrive at a point, a point he constantly emphasizes: "There are too many films where the total dominance of effort is spent on making the frame technically perfect at the expense of what's in it. It is the actor that gives a film soul, not the fact that it's beautifully looking, or that it's got Dolby sound, or that there is great continuity from one shot to the next. If the actor has enough that truth, then the scene lives. I mean, you can get away with murder, technically, if what's happening in the scene is true."

Music is a crucial ingredient in the construction of a character and a way, for Bennett, of uncovering the element of truth in *Dear Carolholder*. His is "just" and



Peking on the screen: Jennifer Claff and Chris Hayward as Lawrence and Colin Turner in *A Shout in the Dark*

Agnes in "Waters." "When I'm writing a script," he says, "I hear the music. I have it, because it dictates so much." Composers Michael Atkinson and Michael Spear have worked with Bennett on each of his films.

Bennett's films have been met with hostility by Australian distributors, too commercial for art-house and too arty for the commercial cinema, it would appear. *Deadlock* is now, however, being released in the Sydney in early November and has been offered a release in North America through Samuel Goldwyn. *A Shout in the Dark*, after a limited theatrical release last year, was screened on Network Ten in March, and has recently done well in Eastern Europe — perhaps, Bennett suggests, because it is viewed as an anti-American film.

Indeed, it is the possibility of overseas distribution that makes Bennett all the more determined. "After going to the festivals at Chicago and Montreal this year," he says, "I noticed that you can make a film that may not work in Australia and get works in other territories. This isn't the only repository!"

With a return in *Deadlock* and generally good reactions from the French press, *Deadlock* was also picked up in Cannes by A&A Classics. Bennett says, though, that he was surprised the film was accepted by the French because it is "very Australian: we make no allowances to internationalize the dialogue. There are no excessive number of colloquialisms. The humor is often very understated, it is not a physical humor — which tends to translate across boundaries in a verbalized humor. So I was surprised when they laughed at all the right places."

But how is Bennett situated in terms of what is happening here? A little guarded in what he says about the Australian film industry, he acknowledges there should be more dialogue, a healthy skepticism, less of the "full poppy" syndrome ("I'm really counter-productive. It is as though filmmakers are competing with each other and we're not there's reason for twenty big films in Australia a year!").

However it is his personal background, his interest generally works on three or four different projects at once; now, however, he is taking the stories he wants to tell. At present, two features, *Shed* and *The Light*, are in different stages of scripting. Very few directors in Agnes also can perform such a quick turnaround period. He brings to each project a responsibility to commitment, promising, saying to show his films as very political, although he would prefer to say that they are films that "care." Certainly they are about opportunity, passion and, most importantly in the Australian context, risk — which is something to celebrate, not deny.

Stemming

A decade ago, the profile of Dutch cinema was so low it was hard not to miss it.

But now, in the eighties, Holland's film industry is beginning to make its mark. Nick Roddick looks at what has been going on, and at some of the themes and topics that continue to obsess Dutch filmmakers.

Keep watching the stars: Leo Schoorel in Peter Paulsmolen's mystery *The Spirit of the Night*.



Movies in dialogue: A pair: Sanderdik (left) with Leo (right) and Leo (left) in *The Girl with the Red Hair*.

THE TIDE

Dutch cinema in the eighties

Right behind remarks about windmills and pauper priests existing the tulip fields in bloom, there is one cliché about Holland that few foreign writers (and even less Dutch ones) seem able to resist: "God made the world," it goes, "but the Dutch made the Netherlands."

With films, the Dutch have been less lucky. It wasn't God (and it certainly wasn't the Dutch) who made certain it was Hollywood And Dutch filmmakers — writers, producers, directors, actors, technicians — have been plagued by the fact since the birth of the movie as cultural dyke has ever been developed strong enough to resist the surge of internationally produced. Of the 287 new films released in Holland in 1985, 162 (56%) were American. Only seven were Dutch, with the home team edged out fourth place, not only by the USA, but by West Germany (24 films) and France (22 films) as well.

The competition for ambitious filmmakers to originate has, therefore, proved almost irresistible, with overseas careers offering more wages and more children. Sometimes, the competition has been ideological, as with the great documentary filmmaker, Janis Ivens, who made only one film in his native Holland after 1950, the rest being made in China, the Soviet Union, East Germany, Cuba, the United States and even Australia (Jacksons Calling, 1946). Mostly, though, the attraction has been facilities and finance. Successful Dutch actors like Rijkman Groenewold, star of *Blonde Jeunesse* and *The Archer*, have gone to Hollywood, or, like Jeroen Krabbé, star of the Dutch film, *The newly weds* (*The Fourth Man*, 1983), to England, where Krabbé will be the villain in the upcoming Bond movie, *The Living Daylights*.

Beyond-the-camera people have gone, too, like Rinus Miejs, who scripted Spafthor's *The Color People*, director Paul Verhoeven (of whom more below), who is now directing a sci fi movie in the USA, and DRIP (in the West, whose camera work on *Jewel of the Nile* was one of the best things about it: "I want to make films like David Lean makes them," Verhoeven told us in 1983, just after he had made *The Fourth Man*: "big and interesting and really for a big audience. But nobody in Holland is interested in that kind of stuff or has the money to do it." Verhoeven then,

of course, went on to make *Flick + Wood* (or *Geen*, which David Lean wouldn't have touched with a bargepole. It was certainly big, arguably interesting, but it didn't get much of an audience).

Nevertheless the movies, however, the past five years have seen something of a boom in Dutch cinema, both on the home front (where, from 1980 to 1984, Dutch films were cornering a larger share of the market) and in terms of international awareness, thanks to the increasingly high profile of the recently banned Holland Film Festival, and up a little to the efforts of the Dutch Film Days and Coöperatief the Dutch Film Market, which had their first outing last 10 September in Lincoln.

But this boom has not been cheap. Given the obvious obstacles to a flourishing feature-film industry in Holland — the dominance of Hollywood, a meagre potential Dutch-speaking audience of around 20 million (in Holland and in the Flemish-speaking area of Belgium), a geographical location which enables Dutch filmmakers to meander on programmes from France, Germany, Belgium and the UK — filmmaking in Holland has, for the past 30 years, been heavily subsidised by the government.

Although the Production Fund system was an unqualified blessing when it was introduced in 1956, it has grown more problematic over the years. The first two years did not have to be paid back (convinced filmmakers to uproot the need for an audience, and, in the poor couple of years, production costs have increased out of all proportion to the available state funds). That is now forcing most Dutch filmmakers to make the kind of choice that is becoming increasingly inevitable in Australia: between low budget art movies with a tiny "sell" ilk, and big-budget epics with a high level of risk but the chance of high profits.

Sigma Films' Marjorie van Huijsmaen has worked in both areas, producing Marleen Gorris's two films, *De Strid* and *Clint Eastwood's M LA Quenon of Silence*, 1982) and Gebrüder Sponsel's *Broken Mirrors*, 1984), as well as commercial propositions like *De Lief* (*The Love*, 1983), the 3-million-guilder (590,000) at the time *Van de Koote Meenen des Doeds* (*The Cool Lovers of Death*, 1983) and the recent mega-guillid gamble, *Op Hoop van Sijne* (*The Good*

Hope, 1984), budgeted at Dfl 9 million (35.8 million, at current prices), which has not paid off. Van Huijsmaen is now backing off from big-budget projects: "I don't think that Dutch filmmakers should try to produce international films," he was quoted as saying recently, in a refusal that will ring familiar downunder. "We should stick to our own heritage and make Dutch films that people abroad also want to see."

DISTINCTIVE VOICES

The best films of the eighties have fitted that bill. And all the films about urban alienation (Holland is, after all, a very urbanised country), the TV-style social realism and the self-conscious experimentation which makes up the bulk of respectable Dutch cinema (the unrespectable side has a sociological jobman which is more or less unrepresented), a few films have really stood out over the past three or four years.

Eric de Kuyper's *Circle Blue* (1982) and *Neughty Boys* (1984) were instantly gay out films. But his 1984 movie, *A Strange Love Affair* (made in English), is much more successful. Filmed by veteran DRIP Boon Aikema, who worked on Chien's *Dois de drame* (1977) and *Quel été braves* (1980) and also Coen's *Le Buis in the Beauty and the Beast*, 1986), *A Strange Love Affair* is a homage to American cinema (there are explicit references to *Johnny Guitar*), but also a fascinating analysis of an affair between a film teacher, Michael (Howard Hirsch), and his student, Chien (Sip van Kampen), which ruminates memories of an affair Michael had with the student's father (Karl Schaefer), some fifteen years previously. In the end, the old affair is identified. But, this time, there is hope.

Scrutinously filmed and elegantly told, the film deserves at the very least a cult reputation, at best an international artistic release.

The Cosmic Union group is something else again. An international artists' collective, active in theatre, film and the visual arts since the mid-seventies, the group's first two features are heavily dependent on

the extraordinary Caribbean actress, Marlene Krolle. In 1981, the group — led by director Felix de Boer, who is from Curaçao, and writer/producer Norman de Pina (from Aruba) — made *Devenen*, an English-language film set in New York, whose apocryphal heroine's life in tragedy partly is filmlike. From a disastrous child hood, through a love affair, and into religious chaos and infatuation. The style is mad yet between documentary and filmed thoughts, and it is Krolle in the tale role who holds it together.

The group's second film, however, *Almaats de Dorothea* (1993), is set in a village on Curaçao, the daughter of a Papenboom, and the result is close to stunning. *Almaats de Dorothea* stories sensibly from realism to talk tale, reflect on ritual action and music, as it tells the tale of a village priestess (Krolle) who becomes pregnant by (apparently) a priest, and of her efforts to save the child. *Almaats de Dorothea*, the last full hour of the film takes on a truly spiritual quality, reminiscent of the late Glimmer Bach's *Antonia das Mortes* — a remarkable achievement.

Less quality but every bit as original, Joe Seefling and Orlof Seidler are two directors who have, against a lot of odds, developed a distinctive personal voice in their films. Seefling's new film, *De Woud wachter* (*The Poetsman*) can claim a third for storytelling the entire film's discourse, in French and Dutch — one character teases one language, one the other, but neither both — consists of less than 100 hours and the ability to create a world with its own rules. Set in an isolated forest here (it was filmed in the north of Scotland), *The Poetsman* constructs a close relationship (Hervon der Wouds, the 'poetsman') with a sophisticated woman (Stephanie Escoffier) who steps off a train late every night and steps through four seasons. Verres between terror, embarrassment and violent possession in their relationship, the poemsman and his visitor finally achieve an eerie balance. *The Poetsman* is the kind of film that has one essential for metaphors, but ultimately forces us to take it on its own terms.

Orlof Seidler, born in 1952, is seven years Seefling's junior. A graduate of the Dutch Film Academy, he got his first taste in film in a TV series, an episode in a four-part history, a documentary, a drama short and two features. The film feature, *De Eeuwige van Wier* (*The State of Wier*, 1982), which was the *Vrijheid* film for best debut film in Venice, is a fascinating but slightly uneven work about a young country girl and her relationship with a naturalist child. But Seidler's second film, *Perovda*, shown at this year's Sydney Film Festival (Melbourne apparently didn't want it) is a clear indication of a major filmmaking talent. Two brothers, a steady father, wife and an investment banker, set off for a mysterious eastern country to visit their dying father. Their father's last wish is to be buried even further north, in Perovda. As the brothers journey into the wilderness, threatened by a hostile climate and hostile inhabitants, their relationship changes, with the wealthy Hans (Johan van der Vliet) overwhelmed by the more unworldly Simon (Gerard Theodien). The journey, though, is what *Perovda* is all about — an intense trek through frozen wastes in a war, snowed deep which finally awakes the life Seidler's *The Poetsman*, *Perovda* creates a world and inhabits it — a strange, beautiful and utterly compelling film.

THE LURE OF THE LAND

Three individual voices stand, though, it is impossible to make definitive comments about a cultural scene in a five-page magazine article. But it seems worth attempting a couple of generalizations. In recent Dutch cinema, two key themes — the land and the war — seem to predominate. The first only seems rather odd, in a country that is densely populated and almost entirely urbanized (426 people to the square kilometre, as against Britain's 235 and Australia's 44). But a periodic re-examination of the traditional values of the land and of the struggle against nature (often, though not always, the sea) seems to occupy, for Dutch filmmakers, the same sort of 'backwards time' function as do the pioneer days in the United States and Australia, or the Victorian era in Britain.

A key film here is the extraordinary *De Dijk in Dordt* (*The Dike in Soestdijk*), directed by Anton Koolhaas in 1949, which analyses the positive deconstruction of a man (Kees Boeser), whose wife has been killed while he was in a German labour camp, with the destruction caused by the bomb that breached the sea wall protecting the Scheldt Delta island of Walcheren. From the opening frames — that man's early, the severed foot of deconstruction — the film shows man and land being rebuilt, mentally and physically, in the art of postwar optimism. And its ending — a village-hall dance, in which film (Boeser) finally breaks the spell of his deconstruction — is as satisfying as anything in the great popular fables of Frank Capra a decade earlier.

In *The Dike in Soestdijk*, as in other contemporary films about the war (such as the partly dramatized documentary, *LOALOP* [1948]), the countryside seems to occupy a special status — a kind of repository of 'real' Dutch values, assaulted by the occupying forces, who have turned the cities and towns into hellish, hostile places. Gradually, though, as peace and prosperity return, a placelessness can be observed similar to that noted by the American critic, Ben Stein, in his book, *The View From Silent Soestdijk* (1979): small towns, once the places where 'real folk' lived, have become hot beds of racism and bigotry, perhaps even of psychosis and other murderous forces. The real people are now urban or suburban.

That, as Paul Verhoeven's 1979 *Spartan*, the only one of the late to live about the topic is perceived, mentally and physically, by his mirror-image father, a religious leader who will not even let it be understood his son's different ways. But the old theme — the old and — of the land begins to overtake, giving rise to one of the more interesting films of the eighties, *De Drence* (*The Drence*, 1983), directed by Pieter Verhulst.

Like Verhoeven's 1980 film, — and first feature — *Met Tekst van Aert Douma* (*The Year of the Death*), *The Drence* is based on historical fact: a rugged political trial in the north of Holland in the turn of the century, in which a socialist farmer, Wouter Bloembergen (Peter Hoogwerf), is falsely accused and even more falsely convicted. The main character all speak the regional dialect of Friesland (in Dutch, the title would be *De Drence*), and Verhoeven's recreation of rural poverty and the desperate, isolated birth of socialism out of need and oppression are sensitively and convincingly handled. A pity

that the last part of the film — the events surrounding the trial — is like the last (and) too ready to become involved in factual concerns. But the film as a whole is one whose failure to travel outside Holland remains a mystery — intriguing, perhaps, that the whole business of filmmaking in the Netherlands is so intensely focused that there is nothing left over for promotion and marketing: producers at major foreign festivals tend to see their films overwhelmed by the publicity machines of larger countries.

OCCUPIED TERRITORY

One interesting aspect of *The Drence* is the way in which the Dutch speaking police in the nearby town of Lissewade (like no, for the French-speaking farmers, the area of an occupation force, above all in the scene in which they first ride into the town), to the simultaneous terror and contempt of the farmers themselves. Searching then about, it is hard not to look at this other recurrent theme of modern Dutch cinema: the German occupation during World War II.

This topic was the subject of an international critics' forum in Utrecht this year, organized by the Circle of Dutch Film Journalists. The title was 'Occupation, Collaboration and Resistance in Dutch Film', and the evening revolved two things: there have been an awful lot of Dutch films about WWII, especially recently, and the subject is one which is quite impossible to relegate to the category of historical oddity.

The war was a time in which the Dutch national character was tested and reborn in a way that could only happen in an occupied country. Communities were split three ways: those who joined the resistance, those who joined the fascists, and those who kept their heads down and survived. 250,000 Dutch people died during the war, especially Jews, who were herded into a ghetto in Amsterdam, then systematically deported and exterminated. The others of the war still stand in Dutch society, and, as the films screened in Utrecht — and some of the opinions expressed in the closing colloquium — suggest, the scars are far from healed.

Dutch films about the war make the same journey from innocence to scepticism as the films about Nazi life — something accentuated by the fact that, by the mid-eighties, these filmmakers making films about WWII are mainly too young to have experienced it directly, even as children. What they have experienced, however — and this is crucial — is the aftermath.

In the early features and documentaries — which are, in any case, few in number, given the very low level of filmmaking activity in Holland in the two decades following the war — there is a 'last war target' issue. Even as late as *De Overval* (*The Silent Raaf*), directed in 1982 by English documentaryist Paul Rotha, the issue is that of an adventure story (albeit a very well-told one), and there is no shading between good guys and bad guys. Indeed, Rotha's Greenpeace style, with its messages of atmospheric shots, gives one the horror (for a 1982 film) impression that one is watching something made during the war.

Twenty years on from *The Silent Raaf*, however, although good and bad are still pretty clearly located — a terms ambly

that a Dutch filmmaker will produce a sympathetic film about a member of the NSB (the Dutch Nazi Party), or even about a reluctant collaborator, a Dutch *Lacoste* jacket is still a long way off — some of the inevitable questions about wartime resistance are beginning to be asked. Were those who joined the resistance inevitably propelled by a heroic hatred of fascists, or may they just have been ordinary young people with a craving for action or even a desire to make old scores? Were all the German murderous marauders, mindlessly carrying out the Master Plan? Did everyone do all they could to help the Jews? Above all, were the noble suggestions of the resistance fighters fully realised — or rebuffed at all — after the war?

They are, in some cases, questions as delicate even nowadays in Holland that filmmakers seem reluctant to ask them directly. Yet the fact that the resistance leaders — the rebels of the early fifties — became the establishment of the fifties and sixties, makes these highly pertinent. Ben Verbong's film, *Het Algemeen met Arie Aalder* (The Girl with the Red Hair, 1981) was among the first to tackle some of these questions. It is the story of resistance heroine Hanneke Schaft (Hanneke Nieuwenhuis, a member of the contemporary resistance) — a group without any role in the anti-German struggle has been successfully played down by official government chronicles. Hanneke's lover and mentor, Harro (Pieternel Toornstra), is clearly someone of what, in the end, would have been called a left opportunist. And Hanneke's own final act seems to have more personal than political motivation. Yet the questions are secondary. Hanneke remains a heroine.

Dominic Patrick Fraenkel's *De Anker van de Kerk* (The Anchor of the Church) tackles, for Holland, a truly dangerous subject: a three-way friendship between a Dutch girl (Berendsema), a German officer (Bosma-Gans), and the Jewish owner of an Amsterdam ice cream parlour (Gerrit Thoenes), who had been friendly with the German in Berlin before the war, where he had been proprietor of a smaller (though much larger) establishment on the Karlsruhemarkt. Again, the film has a bonus in fact: it was drafted between Dutch fascism and anti-fascism outside a Jewish ice-cream parlour that sparked off the spreading of Holland's Jews by the Nazis. But the film is less concerned with historical events than with its characters, and with the pressure that forced ordinary people into making irreversible choices.

A third film, Kees van Gorman's *Stevens Rood* (After Sunset), goes a lot less successfully to take a similar approach to the Jewish question (the Dutch title refers to the latter letter since on the Day of Atonement) The film was originally based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Margje Mince, a Jewish writer who was, like her heroine, the only member of her family to survive the war. But Mince used the producer, and references to the book were dropped. *After Sunset* weighs the disintegration of a prosperous Jewish family, but parallels it with the disintegrating friendship between the daughter (Lieve Spruit) and a friend (Mijntje de Boer) whose father is a high-ranking NSB man. It is an idea that probably looked better on paper than it does on the screen, the clash between the two worlds is too obvious for Sam to be able to link them by the simple (if dangerous) fact of crossing the bridge out of the photo. And, if the same direc-

tion technique: an attempt to approach the subject from a less-than-traditional angle, it causes more problems than it can solve.

Finally, Arie de Jong's *In de Schatten van de Overwinning* (In the Shadow of Victory, 1980) really attempts to take the bull by the tail, by a radical construction and some unsuccessful scenes, it contrasts a pompous resistance man (Jouko Koolhaas) with a Jewish intellectual (Godela de Vries) playing a dangerous game with the Germans, whereby he may be able to save the lives of 800 Jews. The two men's methods are widely different, but perhaps the Jew's are more effective: if in *In the Shadow of Victory* had only been a better film, it might have been the definitive statement about Holland and the occupation.

THREE FILMS

In retrospect, the best film about occupation, collaboration and resistance are those which are, in fact, about something else. And here, the theme of WWII has enabled Dutch cinema to produce three world-class films: one masterpiece, one very good film, and one which still is worth all the careful probes of recent Dutch war films.

Two of the films are by Paul Rudnikowski, whose career has already seen an Academy Award nomination (for *De weg der Kraker* / *Pathos on the River*, 1970), a Berlin Silver Bear (for *Melkers* / *Shades of Wild Geese* / *Two Jesters* / *Die*, 1980), and one of the few Dutch films to get a major release in the United States (the epic *Van Haren* / 1976), about the Dutch in Indonesia, which occasionally shows up here on SBS TV).

But it is his 1983 film, *Als Ieder Drogenk Water* (The Drogenk Deceit), which turns above all of them. Shot in wistful black and white by the immensely kind Conrad, Godela's cinematista, it is a film which begs to be rediscovered — almost, one might say, to be rescued from being Dutch. The film starts in 1942, when a boring (reluctant) called Drogenk (Lies Schoorel) buys a plant (frying line and sets a parachute drifting down behind his house). Impulsively, he takes in the parachute, offering to do anything to help him. The parachute, Drogenk, turns out to be Drogenk's spying agent (and is played by the same actor).

As time goes by, Drogenk gives Drogenk a series of mysterious assignments, which involve him in show-ups, odd-handed manoeuvres and a number of particularly nice which, Drogenk imagines, are making him a resistance hero. But, when the war ends, all trace of Drogenk has disappeared, and Drogenk's men begin to look like those of a traitor, not a hero. He can prove nothing to his captors — not the existence of Drogenk, not the reasons for his acts, not that they were actually successful. Indeed, his own identity has become totally lost, beneath the dyed hair and assumed personality of Drogenk. "The circumstances of war, the threat, the treason, the danger in the background," says Rudnikowski, "have produced very bizarre effects from everyday events. That is what appeals to us artist. Those are the reasons why a filmmaker tackles the subject".

Twentythree years later, with money from the ubiquitous Canon (who are the single biggest force in Dutch cinema), Rudnikowski has returned to the war with *De Anker* (The Anchor, 1986), which

takes the opposite approach: a single wartime event is refracted through the years that follow, making the film a history of Holland from 1944 to 1983.

Towards the end of the war, during the 'bunker season' of 1944-5, when the Allies were in the south of Holland but the Germans still occupied the north, a young boy, Anton, loses his family, almost by chance. An NSB man is shot by the resistance outside the neighbour's house. The neighbour saves the boy in front of Anton's parents' house. The boy's elder brother tries to move in again, but the Germans arrive, and the brother is killed. The family house is looted in revenge, and Anton's parents are shot. An almost fatal event, in a war which saw 250,000 Dutch people die.

The *Anchor* records the event, then follows the boy (now grown into a man and played by Derek de Lint) through the post-war years, with his comfortable professional life well demonstrated by that night in 1944. Anton gradually pieces together the events of the past, meeting the son of the dead NSB man, then the resistance heroine, discovering that the body was never the other way because the people in other houses (where his parents had always thought anti-officially were sheltering a Jew). It is a film which would work better as a miniseries, but do 144 minutes remain the most thorough piece of Dutch cinema yet made about those traumatic and undigestedly formative years. It is to be hoped, like *The Shadow Deceit*, it is continually about something else. The aftermath. And a confirmed date, at 56, Rudnikowski is still a filmmaker of world standing.

The final major film about the war came from the unexpected and unexpected Paul Verhoeven (see the interview in *Cinema Papers* 15, January 1985). Soldier of Orange (Soldier of Orange / *Soldier of the Queen* / *Van Goyen*, 1985) is about a group of poorer college students who are desecrated with the unemployment of industrial. Two more or less drift into the resistance and end up with Queen Wilhelmina in London, making dangerous trips back to Holland, one goes for NSB and dies on the Eastern Front, one is blackmailed into collaborating and becomes a traitor, one simply panics his studies and, in a wonderful last scene at the end, tells the only other survivor how dangerous it was getting through to take his final exam.

What makes *Soldier of Orange* so good is that it records almost no real life, even the NSB man, who dies in a shower outside Stuyvesant when a prisoner boy touches it in a hand gesture. That scene, too, gives the key to the film's strength and meaning: in an area compromised by pity and an excess of caution about plugging in historical facts, Verhoeven blunders ahead with wonderful energy and formalist language through his scenes — such as a re-enactment of a scene in which worthy Dutch bathmen pass flowers into the hands of the invading German soldiers — an unacceptable *Soldier of Orange* is arguably the only Dutch film to have the nerve and pace of a Hollywood buddy movie (Rutger Hauer and Jeroen Krabbé cruising through as we end in crossing down in a motorcycle and motor in a strange piece of filmmaking). And it has the ability, like Rudnikowski's films but in a totally different way, to come to grips in passing with major issues far more successfully than other, more direct, films about occupation, collaboration and resistance.

Getting set to raise the hackles in Hawker

Problems fail to daunt the \$10.5-million *Lighthorsemen*

The sunbaked country was not living up to expectations. Hawker, South Australia (population 100,000, about five hours north of Adelaide) had just been hit by one of those interminable droughts that can ensue for decades but follow film crews with grace.

The small town to close off the roads into the area and halt filming on the ABC/BSA/MSB/UBI show production of *The Lighthorsemen* — the first time in this series — says director and co-producer Simon Wincer that he has had to miss a day of shooting.

The production has not to date had all the luck on its side. A few cooler rains on the third day delayed filming by a few hours. And, as might be in the film industry knows, running out of weather cooper on the first week of your shoot is not something to be relished.

But no one at Hawker seemed disappointed — or intimidated — and that's what Wincer, but not disappointed. The rushed town is on a daily basis from Allied news and writer and co-producer Ian Jones looking, barbed, and the action footage shot so far had everyone with their hands in their mouths.

The Lighthorsemen is an Australian epic — a story about men and horses and water, the poem release rather poetically calls it — that unlike other recent big-budget movies about Aussie battles blazes on impossible odds, ends in triumph not disaster. The film tells the story of the Australian Light Horse Regiment which took part in the British campaign in Palestine in 1917 and its climax is the charge on the banks of Beersheba (which is where the water came in).

It was the last great cavalry charge, says Jones, and it was amazingly successful. It changed the history of the Middle East by taking Palestine away from the Turks.

Jones has, he says, been assisted with the charge and the Regiment that carried it off — he passed to work in it — 45 years ago. In one year, I read *The Desert Column* by Ian Agnew, *The Walls of Beersheba* by Frank Gaby Dawson and saw Charles Chauvel's *Fifty Thousand Men*. Chauvel's film, says Jones, was about a tactical legend, and, although the charge has cropped up from time to time in other contexts, it hasn't

been literally well handled in the past.

Wincer and Jones aim to change all that, and have got the impressive sum of \$10.5 million to spend on doing so — more than was spent on *Gladiator* and more than has been spent on any Australian film to be made to date other than *Mel Gibson's Beyond the Clouds*.

This budget has been made possible by a pre-sale to BBC arranged by Peter and General Hearnings, Anthony Gennaro — and while Australian film would be complex with out him these days? — which screens *Warriors* a 60th return.

At one stage Jones was to have directed the film itself, but appears to have handed over the reins quite the day after Wincer, when he first met what they both worked at, *Corfu*. He's worked together on and off for sixteen years, says Jones. We're not playing eggs, and it's a winning lay a claim.

Given the size of the budget, not slightly surprising thing about *The Lighthorsemen* is the absence from the cast of any of those names that, according to Jane Desmond's *Pattern* that you can do without if you want the Americans to buy your film.

There is, of course, a very strong local cast with John Walton, Jan Blake, Tim McKinnon and Gary Sweet as the four main soldiers who saved a little, film a local, and Peter Phelps as the young recruit who replaces Sweet when the latter is wounded. But only Anthony Andrews, as *Lighthorsemen* represents the sort of international guarantee Australian films are supposed to need.

Wincer is dismissive of the problem, however. What is going to tell the film is not what, he says, "it's the fact of it, the fact of the horses on the banks of your river, well, that's it. But then it comes, you're involved with a character, if you get the audience to fall in love with your character enough, they'll be there with you the whole time. That's what's going to tell the film. It's got the central, the drama, the emotion, a fabulous ending — and they will.

live and better, right, the request as given, below, Tim (John Walton) and Charles (Tim McKinnon) with Frank (Gary Sweet) in *Beersheba*.





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MACQUEEN-CLIFTON

Robbing hoods



THE GREAT BOOKIE ROBBERY

The Great Broken Armillary is a scotch roughly fixed with the well-recognized attitudes and forms of suburban Australia as if to deserve the name of a cultural heritage. The tale is told merely in the landscape and through the commonest images of day-to-day living: families, personal history, symbols and individual needs are discernable factors.

The highly dramatic story is based on the true events of 21 April 1978, when a group of gamblers, headed by the young Vietnam Kieu (Kieu) stole a \$1 million ransom from the hands of a police sergeant and a group of thugs. The story is told from the point of view of the police sergeant, who is a former Vietnam Kieu (Kieu) and a former member of the Red Guard. The story is told from the point of view of the police sergeant, who is a former Vietnam Kieu (Kieu) and a former member of the Red Guard. The story is told from the point of view of the police sergeant, who is a former Vietnam Kieu (Kieu) and a former member of the Red Guard.

Mind you (Pete eagerly chimes in) all the mainstream writers and editors (Pete lights back) are the reserved talent class of the moment. He devoted his loving girlfriend Carol (Katharine Wilson) who during the course of the play becomes his wife, even beyond his husband's magazine coped and robbing game, and he's back in normal life for his family. The widow in black her lips at the funeral, coincides in a multifaceted

Journal Pre-proof

Comic Heynolds (*Dirty Harry*) plays within the more acceptable bounds of tales of criminal life -- a kind of overgrown lawman. Tom Lincey (*Hardy Boy*) is a loyal and proud underdog of the criminal side. Jack Travena (*Hearts of Fire*) is a tough, tough-talking, violent, violent, violent. Conrad Pook (*Radio Love*) is reported to be the most wanted man in Vietnam and out there that most violent and scary of the crew, is simply someone who goes to his "being stuffed" and

While the legitimate crime and the legitimate court battle are the same, ultimately, as represented by Moore and Ross' *Temps* (Paul Giamatti and Ray Meagher), a second defendant, Sister Gary (Gary Plett), and a counting coup Detective Edwards (Gemma Jones). The *Temps* rate the usual underdog through parents' stand-over tactics. For Edwards the *Temps* are the last that ends her to the big fish. In this case, her parents (John Lithgow) are the big fish. When justice brother, Ross, is killed by Power's men, her access to Power is his only help. In the end, it is one of the film's most believably twisted moments.

The Great Ouseford Abbey makes no bones about the recent issues of crime. Like a Hammett novel, crime is an unambiguous fact which separates qualitatively between Father Moore (Peter Cushing) to pronounce over at Power's funeral in the concluding chapter of the first

Shawna shooting John Earl Ray,
Ray Memphis (wearing) and Paul
Snider in the Civil Rights
Movement era.

graduate in one of the areas, most teaching positions. Many teachers holding the older licenses) under a law compensated the teachers's performance of dance lessons. I wonder what would have become of me if I did a few dance lessons.

Raising the Tom Roberts painting *Ball's Up: The Great British Robbery* masterfully obscures the bushrangers raised their mask. They are the Australian Heroes and Clyde, fences and headless who exist solely within the crime fiction genre. During one scene, a pivotal moment from the Australian film *Black Money* flicks across a television screen.

By the same token, the conclusion of the first round of the conference will have to refer to a possible continued learning. After Powers' long learned, last words, he said, "I'm going to leave this world with a lot of questions. One of them is whether the United States is a democratic nation. Power was in the end of tragic situations and easy divorce. Continuing (John Kennedy) is a very good example of the American political system. It's the end of an era. They don't make from the Powers any more. Edwards the man who represented Powers is dying, and a generation to a small, better known. And the society is totally involved in the world, and also in the future from the world."

10

The *Great British Robbery* now ranks as one of the finest achievements of local TV production. Inquisitiveness and consistent performances help resulted in every department. Philip Corfield's script is accurate to the last word, sharp and gripping. The sense, pace and excitement really let up. Shot by Elton Ryan, directed by Marcus Cole and Mark Jeffs and edited by Karyn Rogers, it has a distinctive though less than ideal style.

It has been perfect by some criteria to the quincy. And in most (James Alden, *The Sweeney and Wilson*, but that is still a work of cultural snobbery. The lowercase manner of *The Great Book of Robbery* is too stylish, sedate, and exciting is really about the necessary.

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[illegible]

When movies were still silent but talking learned there was a special last ditch stand by one or two uptown burlesque who argued that with dialogue the universality of cinema would be lost henceforward each film would speak only to that country whose language it talked.

The same argument has cropped up here and there in other passages but on the old idea that: if reason could only talk to reason, the world's problems would evaporate. The communicative possibilities of television were once envisioned as much like some kind of universal

As it turned out, TV has proved to be one of the most narrowly circumscribed of media. But critics have retained a vestige of that old-time nationalism (perhaps because an instinct for conservatism is ingrained by circumstances being so used to them). Here can thrust an unprepared and unprotected old soldier's word.

Only certain films of course — those of Yasujiro Ozu for instance with their shuttled window on Japanese bourgeois life. And occasionally those films which show us rural life: *Gojigen* (Fukuzen's *Paradise*) (1944) for instance or more recently *Waka no Koto* (The Sound of the Cherry Blossoms) (1972) by *Shigeo Fukuda* and *Yoshiaki Kuroda* (1980) or *Sakurayama* (1981) by *Shigeo Fukuda*.

In addition to their considerable textual merits, all of them carry the special thrill of a suddenly ordered horizon at a beat intimacy with something strange beyond our experience — something which exists without any reference to us, with no need of us or concern for our mortality or understanding.

It is interesting to look at *Alfred Gwynne's Las Simas* (New York: The Folio Society, 1994), a book that is at once a piece of family history and a study of the life of the Spanish province of Álava, which today has 200 years of a shared history with Mexico (Mexico's Álamo). The heart of the manuscript is dominated by the young writer Juan López, not less than 20, but as a useful source in his unforgettable scene. López, on hands and knees, writes the first of a passage through a field while the soldiers and the friends look on in awe and wonder.

As if all the last scenes weren't the best at Peco's family, a highly emblematic, a striking note Róhula (Teresa Rábalo) who cannot have ever go beyond the philosophy of Foucault: a son who leaves for the city, a daughter who studies but an education by being put into service in the great house and the little girl, a catenone child who periodically comes broadcasting accounts of cocaine use and misery.

And then there is Reginald's brother Aeneas, magnificent played by Francisco Rabal. Buñuel's Aeneas—who is markedly different from the Aeneas given to posterity—has his hands to stop them chipping, and likely to shed anaphors without notice.

Against a background of such a fragile economy, the National Council for the Blind, through its Strategic Unit, has established links with the local

Beyond the fringe



THE HOLY
INNOCENTS

Major realism: *Against Epiphenomenalism* (Kahn) and the *Belgian* published in *Manuscripta* (The *Belgian* is a review).

sons and daughters. The May 1996 episode with Anna's husband delightfully is an ode to her son, the father of the film's ending (through the father of the boy who befriends and seduces Anna's May 1996 self, an episode which, like the theme of Michael's Colorado, leaves up all the possibilities). It is a poignant, poignant sequence, with its couple's passionate embrace, sense of place and personal merged into the film's usual with two mothers from towns in Karnataka's Doordarshan or the family with their home in Delhi's New of Woodstock (1996).

But between them is far more to The Holy Innocents than a troubling lawsuit. Through a tape of testimony, Oates the filmmaker spins and weaves the film hangs the spirit and legacy of *Buried*'s Lee Mendelson (*Jesus Without Jesus*, 1992).

It is worth remembering the puerilest time period — and to some extent still exists — Los Angeles. Coming after the surrealized landscape of Los Angeles (middle and large size) (1980) is a humorous documentary film that evoked the crisis prompting them to seek the hidden human side.

There was more. For by 1988 the principal adolescent node in Britain

are read (other than in the work of Salvador Dalí) given way to André Besson's more serious political stance — Surrealism at the service of the Revolution — as Besson's message put it. And like the message of Les Amateurs was finally simple: How in the age of the motor car and the airplane could such poverty exist?

That too is the message of *The Holy Innocents*. But it is as if it is in Buñuel's film contained within not just his top. *The Holy Innocents* is certainly loaded with dramatic graphics. Hans Buñuel, capturing the thing on top of the Extreme, quiet plain, and lighting and composition. He intends it as a way that is both partially and real. But the reality of Buñuel's film is also

I have no pity of knowing — and not forgive — have more than half a dozen people on the continent — whether the film a part of life or an extraordinary visit in the society is accurate. But I have all the contempt and the contradictions of truth. And I understand that we forget that life is not the truth, but the truth of our nature, one of the century's most patient and most misperceived patients.

Like any corporation, the Holy See's mission is more real than real (that's why it is not a corporation). And it comes from Jesus to

provoke thought not lul us with
creaky stylish cleverness. Like all
such provocations it is an exhibit
long experience — a form of cinema
generally led to the origins of
filmmaking or the sparsity of ex-
pression.

There is nothing reassuring about Caprice's line and its reminder of strange and convoluted wish-lists, bank transactions and a shifting time scheme. But it is a device and unforgettable too — the kind of film that we too easily get the chance to see in Australia. As such it should not be missed.

[illegible][illegible]



MY LIFE WITHOUT STEVE

His story

Historically, the discourse of sad scenes is defined not by the women who are involved, but by the men who are involved. In this case, the man is Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes

The short film *My Life Without Steve* can be accepted into Barthes's "heterosexual position" because, again, it is a woman elaborating the fiction: telling of the loss of her lover and the loss of her self. Liz (played by Jenny Holzer) is the central character, deliverer of the monologue. She is *Prescience*, wearing songs (sheep-squeal yappings from a dairy queue come from theoretical writings: the words of her theoretical notes from a friend and family letters into a remote text, layered with questions about female sexuality and — oh! — love — the post-forensic condition.

The fugitive nature of the text is complemented by the precisely composed (though deconstructed) series of visual images. Cinematographer Enka Adas is the person capturing the screen in the opening shots with a limited (just like one of Barthes's selected) expressive works. The view is broadened to reveal a harbor, teeming with last-minute activities. Then, leaning toward the suggestion of a journey, the camera pans up to the window of a visual text.

Aspects of this domestic interior are revealed slowly, a certain ruffling in the bedroom, a still life, an old painting of the picturesque (as we have just seen, an unmade bed) — and a photo (which provokes the first words: "After you left I moved in here, forgetting the view would tell me out of the misery").

The words are still and slowly punctuated. The tone is, however, countered by the smoother, more abstract flow of images. Holzer implements a subtle blurring on the scene: a close-up of purple flowers, a tub of red flowers on the windowsill

a decorative ceiling pattern — Margaret Frevin paintings (repeated with the sister paintings) into the sculptures, are all given into specific photographic equipment: videotapes, drawings, books on psychoanalysis and literature, film and revolution, screen legends and flowers, always flowers.

The structure for the entire film is established in the initial scenes: one woman's room and a series of images, presented as if two were turning the pages of a book. A very restrained pace is kept throughout. There are moments of irony, a desperate kind of humor, but generally a sense of truth and artistic boldness. From the window the view changes from early morning to night. Four seasons go by.

My Life Without Steve is very personal cinema, written and directed by Jenny Holzer. It is a suggestive portrait, but ultimately very frustrating, like the film's attempt to deal with issues that the film's subject, feminism, has denied. It points to the contra-

dictory which exists between ideology and practice — in this instance, what it is that, when we love, it examines the process of negotiating degrees of independence, independence, and isolation, the "unbearable truth" that you should not be just a lover.

These questions are the core of Liz's story. She tries to find answers or consolation in fragments of popular song (singing "I Fall to Pieces," "Forever Now," "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," and "My Cynical's Yours"), and in the letters of her mother. When her mother sends her the boxes of Freud, Lacan, Marguerite, and Derrida.

However, it is when these catalogues begin to form the problematic nature of *My Life Without Steve* is more complex. Liz's character is too slowly defined and introduced, the two levels of irony and is still trapped, disoriented with the process of the past. While the images continue to produce the very good nature of her character (the fragments of theory do not come into any pattern). The film is frustrating precisely because the images provide a way of investigating and analyzing Liz's past, but this is not supported by the text. The theoretical questions are a challenge of (dis)orientation, and the film is not intended to make random but abstracted moral points. The questions she raises — which are "I think, I feel" — are defined, not controlled.

Liz made the decision of the scene. Where is the new material, conditions for more than just survival? she asks. She then apologizes for the entire book, of these are questions, are we appear and not allowed to ask.

The paradox in this film that wants to be about a woman's discovery of herself should let itself go, further and further, and the wholeness of one's relationship and a sense of difference and reason.

Feminists have argued that women should in fact translate the difference should use hope and anger to acknowledge a personal strength, and, more broadly, to contribute to feminist politics. This is the contradiction in *My Life Without Steve*. Liz might not own the difference. The conclusion implies denial, for the women defined by Steve (whose voice we never actually hear) the same predictable movements have been made on the sexual battlefield.

Kathy Acker

My Life Without Steve Directed and written by Jenny Holzer. Produced by Jenny Holzer and Oliver Lutz. Director of photography: Enka Adas. Editor: John Mackay. Editor: David Holzer. Music: Steve. Cast: Jenny Holzer, Jay. Production company: Giffels. Distribution: Home. Screen: 48. Minutes: 1980.

Lovers' labours lost

If Knapman can deal with King Lear, then Cranberry can't at least by such Florentine and Jotai. My brother Tom, the stage agent and occasional writer of Pseudotale, lives in San Francisco at the small country town of St. Helena on the Mendocino. The two young boys, Tom (14) and Jerry (12), and Papi (California McClellan), are separated not just by thirty miles but by religion. He is a Baptist and she is a Catholic.

The real town of Children provides a charming setting for the tale of modernity and the surrounding landscape offers scope for beautiful photography, but neither can steel the messages from history. My daughter first visited and immediately is a bit silly. Perhaps an earlier one that would have better suited it, it is a beautifully subtitled story.

Religious bigotry ought to make for a more complex and interesting story indeed, until quite recently in Austria, religion determined social standing, politics and employment, and had distinct racial overtones, but none of these is explored with any subtlety or depth. Consequently the characters in *My Brother Sam* are reduced to stock types. John Hill, 1994, pp. 109-110

Adding their way (and of this double) into the realm studied as being purgatorial English means father Edward Quayle and Gordon Jackson as Reg's Comic Father (father Locke MacGibbon). Three excellent performances, however, stand out.

advantage from the use of the
cost

As the town is polluted by the violence and the threat of an uncontrollable union between Tom and Peg (the two young lovers seem to exhaust their range of local expressions), they either appear scorned by parental friends or look wryly into each other's eyes. Tom's politics and strength of character (for which the narrator insists do not come) and his disavowatory dialogue go forward to 58 Haines is as fully confirmed as it is written.

[illegible]

The first easy bloody fight between Tom and Finn (Christopher Plummer), the lowly Catholic bully, takes place in the boxing ring (perhaps a sword fight might have been more suitable). Tom wins, of course, because he is a lot better than the

The professor's Gordon Lecture at UCL was introduced at my lecture time.

by a glimpse of Png. But to reveal
his and Png's relationship to readers
back by an earlier century. Even so
and in the 20th century, her father
literally sends her away to the
mission in *Chatterbox*.

For all its faults, *My Brother Sam* does attempt to show the folly and stupidity of religious prejudice. However, Tom's equation of the bigotry of St Helena's to that of Nazism is too brief to be as powerful as it might have been.

Finally the war takes over from Shakespeare. Tom goes down with his plane and Peg, who has become a nurse, is down to peace by a rare. Their names appear on the 50th Anniversary memorial — together in death as they never were allowed to be in life. At the grand, old old (Shakespearean) stage, writes the

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The girls' own story

3 FRIENDS



Family chairman Eric McQuinn says James Cook (center) and Alvin Karpis in John Carpenter's 1936 film.

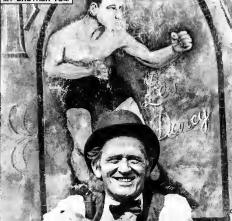
While many loan movers seem unable to run down the problem of how to get it — probably what he looks and out of them — Post-1980s immigrant immigrants (Gore and Daughter) *Wapikoni: A Country Practice* (The Handwritten Book) (with permission) illustrated as "Indian" name, writing to the FBI, running away, saving the town's Aboriginal cave art, or handing off illegal auto searches and hit men.

The *Al Qaeda* memoir, written by Hassan Gawroni and directed by Jane Campion, is a remarkable departure from the narrative fiction tradition associated with TV's *Homeland*. It looks at the writer and the subject from twenty angles: the Yemeni wife, the American wife, the Yemeni wife's daughter, and others. It summarizes the events and the consequences of the 9/11 attacks, and it does so in a way that is both powerful and poignant. The first season of this miniseries is the best. It is a masterpiece of the genre, and it is a must-watch for anyone who is interested in the events of 9/11. It is a masterpiece of the genre, and it is a must-watch for anyone who is interested in the events of 9/11.

And it shows the stark and raw of the relationship between two major political forces (and a third, Clinton and Gore) that has been a constant in the American political landscape. It is not the Americans that keep me on the edge, but the Americans on the stage. But at a very early, crucial event, the gate having been slammed shut, the audience that was to be the audience of the future was already divided. For many a majority is achieved at the first stand in a political career. While this climactic event is not removed from the run of national language broadcasts, the sharply focused conflict in which it is now considered, with Clinton's and Gore's pre-war words and their characteristic style.

Both young pairs go to bed early toward their full 10th birthday, pecking, feeding, and warming and maintaining themselves by huddling. Both are able to capture the complexity of a social situation. Both have the capacity to act to the peak. Works well. Starter is clearly a sign of competence. After about 4-6 days, the Starter brings food and uncomfortable to social situations. This is followed by a series of food and social interactions in environments that are both familiar and strange.

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USA by Pat H. Broeske

Looking for the high flyers

Hollywood began with uneasy numbness at a private screening and culminated with Frank Price's resignation as chairman of the Motion Picture Group and president of Universal Pictures. In between, their George Lucas predicted Howard the Duck will lose; he even is most talked about rumour that features it not only, flew in an after action between Price and MCA president and chief operating officer Ted Geithner, one who usually asks to retire for their \$55 million plus box office loss.

The summer movie drought is much anticipated \$8 million advertising campaign (the book case not as reveal the film is leashed early). Howard the Duck garnered just \$5 million in its first week out (\$20 million the 12th Part of Jason Lives topped it at the box office that week and it was shortly dwarfed later there. Howard managed only \$14.9 million at the box office while Liger Debris Universal's other leashed summer entry, grossed \$40 million and is usually offsetting the reported box office cost.

Columbia Pictures also had its share of late summer disappointments with the announcement that their top box Christmas picture would not be released until 22 May 1987. The announcement came at the same time that a 90-second trailer for the mega-budget comedy (the figure is said to be \$30-50 million) was making the rounds as an independent hit. It's the 1984 picture of the comedy, *Amos and Delverius*.

The announcement looked off a flurry of gossip that alleged everything from a potentially disastrous film (more than any film until now) surrounded readers that director Diane May's last film *Johnny and Mary* had barely been released to reports of problems between May and her two \$4 million (apiece) stars Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman.

There was also the word of a picture who were left without a major Christmas release. Four studios (Columbia MGM United Artists and General) now have nothing for moviegoers to take home. And Universal's daily entry *Deliverance* will only have limited circulation in Los Angeles and New York that leaves many cinemas without product which may explain the phone calls that reportedly flooded the De Universal Pictures offices with requests to book either *King Kong Lives* or *Conan of the Barbarians* (which at present stated for a limited release pattern).

The summer top line (Part 25 May to 1 September) went well by Top Gun with total sales of \$119.1 million, followed by *The Karate Kid Part II* with \$98 million and *Hoosier* (*Daughter's Back to School* with \$40.3 million).

Although Sylvester Stallone's *Cobra* was widely derided as a summer flop, it managed total sales of nearly \$50 million — making it the



"I'm in a creative struggle with myself as to what allows the film's success." Stallone and *Daughter's Back to School* star Gena Rowlands

summer's seventh highest grossing film. Asked about this film's disappointing ticket sales, Stallone said: "You're getting a lot asked about this business, wouldn't you say? If each one of my movies makes only \$50 million, I'll go to my grave a happy man."

Speaking from the Las Vegas set of *Over the Top*, he described his latest film as "a great little love story." Directed by Cameron's Moss (the *Gladiator* director), it represents a change of direction for Stallone, who this time will not stick up a body count. He plays a father trying to reconcile with his estranged son during a cross-country odyssey.

Asked if audiences will buy him in such a property, he admitted:

"You're right — I carry a lot of baggage with me in the way of past characterizations — even in the last half hour. They'll be saying, 'Oh, where's the gun come out? When's the bomb go off? What's his punch somebody?' It's bringing that with me at the time."

So serious was this a tendency to just say, "every eleven or twelve or so, put on some action-oriented scene, the film could feel very nicely without. I am in a constant struggle with myself to avoid being boring, the film, slitting it roughly. The film rolls into view in February."

Meanwhile, cinema box office in Los Angeles on June 26 is not temporary comedy about a mystery writer who juggles love and money (which is directed by Jerry Bruckheimer and stars Billy Crystal, Michael Caine, Sherry Stringfield, Phyllis Diller, Jackie Cooper and Louise

Lewis. TV long *Amos and Delverius* is the co-producer).

Summer School, directed by Carl Reiner, is also being filmed in Los Angeles. It is about a gym coach who reluctantly teaches a remedial English course during a summer school session and a star Mike Heaton and Anne Aron.

A contingent of visitors (Bette Davis, Lillian Gish, Anne Sullivan, Vincent Price and Henry Cavill Jr.) are in Maine, making *The Wives of August* based on the novel *Barry*. It is about an emotional crisis that leaves two elderly widowed women. The director is Lindsay Anderson.

Finally in Chicago and LA, screenwriter John Hughes is co-producing and directing (from his script) *She's Having a Baby* (Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern) — apparently Billy Crystal was an available



Britain by Nigel Floyd

After the British Film Year, the British film slump

Over six months down the track, developments resulting from Censor's relaxation of Theatre Film Screen Exemptions (see *Cinema Papers* 14 July 1968) continue to dominate the British film scene.

Censor now controls 450 of the country's 4,130 cinema screens, but the Office of Fair Trading has finally decided not to order the nation's five Multiplexes and Margot Company, and the company rescues on plans for a nationwide screen multiplex in London's West End have been backed up by proposals for multiplexes in ten other major cities. Meanwhile, on film production front Censor has plans to withdraw its newly imposed studies in Britain where the £40-million (\$88-million)

Sebastian *W* is now shooting, leaving a gap gap at Rank's top Release, which is where it was scheduled to shoot before the take-out. As reported in *Cinema Papers* September US column the plan is for Christopher Reeve, Gene Hackman and Margot Kidder. *Seiken J* Fuse will shoot.

On a much less optimistic note however, the British Film and Television Producers' Association is turning to the government for help. During the first half of 1968 fifteen feature-films a total of £14.6 million (\$27 million) started production, compared with 26 feature films of £19.1 million (\$36.6 million) for the same period last year.

The BFTPA is asking the govern-

ment to consider a variety of tax allowances and other fiscal incentives to investment, pointing out that current production levels are running at less than half the average for the last three years.

One of the films that has gone into production is the latest Bond epic, *Man of the Year*, which will not now star Bond. *Sebastian* in the leading role of 800 (Sebastian has been unable to free himself from his contractual obligation to the recently repatriated American TV series *Remington Steele* Producer Robert Swickard has therefore named Timothy Dalton as a 72½ year-old school boy credits under the name of *Man of the Year* (Sebastian and *The Doctor* and the *Great* in *Robin Hood's* replacement).

A very different production, *Julia* about Juliet Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Gustav Hasford's *Heat* novel. *The Good Years* has finally rescheduled after a typically lengthy twelve-month shoot. *Warrior* (Lido Shop of *Warrior* on the other hand, recently insured to *Remington* for some extra shooting, despite the fact that it was already 20 days over schedule when it wrapped in June.

Another production, *Man of the Year* was finally postponed following a bizarre press conference at London's National Film Theatre during which star Bob Dylan remained as tight-lipped as ever. The delay in *Man of the Year* was caused by Dylan's insistence on a rewrite of his life about "myself, my family and success".

Finally, with their latest *Ed* Foster adaptation, *A Room with a View*, still enjoying a successful run at London's houses and provincial circuits, James Ivory and Ismail Merchant have announced plans to film another Foster novel, *Maurice*, a posthumously published volume in which the author's sexual life is homosexuality, which had been hidden until then.

Recent British openings have included *Sebastian* in *Cobra*, which was closed to press screening in the hope of luring some of the people for some of the time. After a strong opening, it then faded away. *Woody Allen's* *Manhattan* and *Her* (which on the other hand, has brought his screen time out again, and was only delayed from the summer box office slot by *Alvin*).

And despite being dismissed in some quarters as "unimpressive" both Russell Mulcahy's eye-opening fantasy adventure *Highlander* has opened nationwide to acceptable audiences. Not that Mulcahy need worry about being out of a job as well as being engaged by Skyvision Stations to direct *Rembo* if Mulcahy also recently signed a three-picture contract with Dino De Laurentiis.

The widening gap between what is acceptable in the way of explicit sex and violence on British and television screens in Britain (where there is no system of TV censorship) has been highlighted by the *Sebastian*, which followed *Chaplin*. It's a recent screening of two Derek Jarmen films, *Sebastians* and *Jubilee*.

Attacked by Conservative MPs and close-up-TV campaigner Mrs Mary Whitehouse, the recently shelved film, reportedly by introducing a warning symbol, will be deployed in the top right hand corner of the screen throughout any potentially shocking film. "Whoever they are about to watch or have stumbled upon the film in question will thus be warned that a serious scene which may give offence if they are of delicate sensibility."

The major TV channels, however, have already rendered such a system obsolete by screening American TV stations (which will be familiar to American viewers of films like *Body Heat* and *The Rose* when *Always* (Fangs Two) whose obscenity censoring renders them all but incomprehensible.

In film production in Germany these days, it is considered best to stay far from the newsstand story. As it follows up to *Münchener (Munich)* which was the summer sensation director Conrads (Conrad) has now completed his new film *Calicut* which is apparently a long comedy story about a zoological professor married to an ethnic Vietnamese who one day falls in love with her extremely improbable acquaintance.

Calicut looks like being the best of the comic bunch at this rate by comparison with the other "funny" films in the offing. *Diebstahl (Larceny)* or *Diebstahl* is a writer/director comedy by Dietrich Fricke. Another seems to be able to charm the heart of things out on a regular basis, but at least this time he has Austrian rock star Falco (Falco) as his lead character. And then there is *Dieb (Thief)* whose specialty is a fairly straightforward brand of slapstick humor. He will have *Dieb* and *robin* (Robin) in the comics in good time for Christmas. As usual, the story is a simple one: our hero is drawn to France with a load of highly exploitable ideas. Of course, *Dieb* is far the slightest idea of the danger involved.

With comedy as king, the German movie production (G.D.) Company is finding the going too tough, and we have to close its doors at the end of the year. An independent, unaided comedy filmmaker, the G.D. has for the past seven years, been trying to find a way of putting slapstick films into public theaters. But the financial situation has now deteriorated to the point where it will stay on only longer —

Germany by Dieter Osswald

The new season: lots of laughs, floods of festivals but a dead end for docos

valuation as a result of swimming against the tide. It is now the G.D.'s numbers put it.

The same sort of problem doesn't seem to be hitting Germany's film festivals — quite the opposite in fact to judge by a list recently produced by the Austrian Film Ministry (and inevitable term of cottage front Munich) at the event. 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New Zealand

by Mike Nicolaidi

Confidence creeps back into the Kiwi film industry

The proverbial light at the end of the tunnel may have dawned for the New Zealand feature film industry at its darkest hour.

The Lange Government's 20 July Budget withdrew existing income tax breaks by comparison with other investment opportunities such as stockbroking and has begun to rub salt into the cultivated stir.

The incentive formula enshrined on film when its blossoming days were stylised in 1984 was a 100% one-year write-off on investment in certified New Zealand films. This formula remains in place and industry leaders believe investors are again expressing cautious interest.

Indeed cautious optimism is already a pervasive mood, with Film Commission Chairman David Gilmour telling the press the industry is not yet out of danger, he says, but there are glimmers of hope.

Producers and Directors Guild President John Barnett carries signs of a burnout that could inhibit interest in the one-year write-off, and says the Inland Revenue Department is examining 60 special partnerships which existed in films before 1984. He hopes this will result in some passive investment by overseas investors whose interests are held up.

These leading Auckland two dozen reflect the new optimism. Mudge Films' Larry Finn believes there will be a lot more action in 1987 with more foreign money directed to him. One of the real problems is that there are so few close-up scenes worth making into films, he says.

Director's Dan Reynolds says this provided budgets are kept to around \$1.5 million and projects appeal to overseas investors there should be little difficulty obtaining local investment.

Uyot Protege of Philippe Whitehouse Productions, who will be moving on his filming of the *Blue Bird* director project once a co-production treaty between the New Zealand and Canadian governments is in effect, even lists a touring card as being worthy of consideration by local investors. He also notes that touring events are special is necessary for any project.

The oval of mood was symbolized by the presence of Prime Minister Lange at a reception in Auckland's Regent Hotel on 12 September to announce local release plans for four New Zealanders over the summer months.

Generally enthusiastic though specificity provided Lange disclosed the industry as "not in ordinary" in its ability to adapt to South Pacific conditions, and gave an interesting list of discussion problems with film commissioners and guild representatives while it is the

Government's view that film can compete with other investment opportunities. He says he is prepared to encourage "greater vitality and confidence" in the industry.

Meanwhile, Film Commission Marketing Director Lindsay Shelton together with Executive Producer Paul Davis, visiting executives of Wellington's Global Group and Mudge Films, have been issuing product at MIPCOM in Milan. The line up includes Richard Todd's *Answer*, Lindsay John Lange's *Other Melvins* and *Dangerous Offshore*, and Bruce Mather's *Queen City Hotel*.

Paul Shelton another representative of the renewed confidence is the *International Documentary* (London) *Edge* meeting at the country's Southern Alps. With former independent distributor Barry Lusted as executive producer, the film will be a sequel to director Michael Petts' spectacular *Ice* and being filmed by: *Off the Edge*.

Elsewhere, the announcement of New Zealand's first co-production agreement with Australia (see this column in *Cinema Papers* 28 September 1986) is already being engineered. At least two companies, Photos Whitehouse and the Ocean Group have 15 meetings people with Australian interests that may qualify under the scheme.

There is also the matter of *Witness* Ward's *The Navigator*, which attempted presentation with the news of its abandonment some months back. Ward moved to Australia in August and Australian John Matherly has since been investigating the possibility of shooting the feature in both Australia and New Zealand.

Projects approved as official co-productions by the New Zealand and Australian Film Commissions will qualify for official film production incentives as applying in both countries. Gilmour says the agreement will further strengthen the links New Zealanders have with the Australian industry, while AFD Chief Executive R. H. Williams notes the collaboration will help give both industries a competitive edge in world markets.

The growing strength of television production in New Zealand is signified by the developing suggestion of TVNZ International to acquire interests. For the first time it joined the Film Commission and the



World's Greatest Down Under Star: Mudge, Don Jackson, Joe Perrow

National Film Unit at MIPCOM in Cannes. That may lead to its own stand next year. The group will be one of mounting local film. Peter is TVNZ's highly praised adult series *The Air Racer*, written by Maurice Gee and produced by Greta McDonald.

Independent programme supplier Giffney Motion was also at MIPCOM with the *Myopoli* *Surridge Down Under* series. This property will be a grand 30-hour made-for-television series in the short following Southern Television's loss of a broadcasting licence in the UK. Motion has now completed five *Down Under* episodes, with several stars Jon Perrow and Lina Jackson, and has another twelve going into production in the New Year. Thirteen episodes are in script development. Motion's target is 60 episodes by November 1987 — enough for a station on US television.

France by Edouard Waintrop

A tale of two budgets, or Two lessons in how to make a film

According to the summer's crystal ballgazers, the traditional French rush to work at the end of August was going to be characterised by two major cinema events.

The first was to be Jean de Marais's *Clouds* film and the first half of a two-part adaptation of Marcel Proust's charming novel *The Side of the World*. It had been awarded as it was part of the magazine and cinema, and received artistic promotion. Finally a radio station and live television network that didn't devote at least one hour a day to an art film, to promoting it.

As a result, the latest film by the director of *Le Havre* was at the top of the list of 1986 — who said that his own best review was a positive review in *Le Monde* during the last week of Le Paris sat 281,000 tickets sold.

But before the film had time to be a great deal less good than the review and less good than the film of *Le Havre* the master film



maker word of mouth was not quite up to expectations, and the second week showed something of a fall of 175,000 people will be paid to see it.

All the same it may begin to through the very unlikely but much wanted film which features the faces of French cinema stars (Yves Montand, Daniel Auteuil, Gérard Philipe, Jean-Pierre L  aud) and will reach its target (around 1.2 million) which it took to make the two episodes.

The second big event had to do with the *Barbare* it goes without saying that as things move ahead in French cinema, *Barbare* will be the first film to come in the opposite end of the scale from *Le Havre* (which is a cost the heavy sum of 4 million francs (just over \$1 million) to make, at a time

when *Barbare*'s *Le Havre* was released in the US before it hit the French screens.

When the *Barbare* French film budget is around 10 million francs. What is more, before the film had even opened to producers had been coupled in subsidies and prizes the equivalent of 60% of its budget.

From the US *Clouds* came up with \$25,000,000 with the *Barbare* also had that *Le Havre* was opened in New York under the title *Surridge* on 29 August. Five days before its official French premiere.

For its part Canal Plus (the French pay TV service) paid \$25,000,000 as a part of a unique deal. And for the first time ever in France, a film was shown on television three days before it opened in the cinema.

Japan

by Georgina Pope and Naoko Veda

Stepping out of line



France report cont'd

Because of this, La Révolte will survive under the aegis of films which would be shown for the first time on any of the new TV channels. That made it eligible for a subsidy from a fund aimed at supporting TV programming industries. So with the official status of television, it qualified for the pay sum of 1 700 000 francs (\$410 000).

In the event, La Révolte will cope with its scaled-down budget, cost a lot more than expected, the discovery of the pay cost added for satellite states over the English Channel which could not bring its debt until several months after the close shoot in Les Palmes in the Canary Islands.

Production too turned out to be more costly than it should have been. Two successive blow-ups from 16mm to 35mm to get the right quality, and a final cut in between meant that the final budget was four times the original estimate. Even so, it was still a third less expensive.

It all seems to have paid off, however. The film opened strongly in Paris, with 20 000 tickets sold in two cinemas. Just as French's total came from 8-9. Good reviews and a strong word of mouth mean that business is likely to hold up, especially since the film carried off the Golden Lion at the 44th Venice Film Festival.

This is the first major prize for Banner, the original pioneer of the French new wave, and it has finally enabled him to acquire the power and critical acclaim long associated with TV screening and it may indeed elevate the Venice prize to the New York opening. A movie film instead

*Above and below: Yōsuke Nakada as the character and Michio Fujita as the director (Michio Kudo), a member of Akira Kurosawa's 1958 *Seven Samurai*. One scene from *Impassioned**



in Japan, the life of an assistant director is generally not an easy one. But for the last time in seventeen years, a major studio has given him a position as a university graduate is doing more in an industry where the youngest assistant director working for a major studio is 30 years old (average age is 45). After an assistant has been working for him to fifteen years for a major, he is given a chance to direct. No movement at the box office and they are regarded for life.

The opportunity for Shochiku along with their recently resuscitated Ohta studios, and came a long way from the recent practice of using budget-production companies or productions financed by majors and the strengthening of the new studio system.

For the last 25 years the only major taking on cinema staff has been Nikkatsu, where 90% of the productions are left over for widespread domestic consumption. This village has however been a launching pad for a number of directors who have managed to move on to greater pastures: the most recent being Taira Tsukuru who directed *Comic Allergies*, which arrived in the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes this year. Michio Kudo, Nagata, who directed *Chin*, also began his career in print production.

One of the few directors in Japan who has not come from an assistant director situation — print or other way — is Yōsuke Nakada, who is known locally for *Formy Game* (*Platoon Game*). An untested self-producer, Moira privately raised the finance for his last feature, *Live in*

Chapeau. Shot on 8mm, it is a documentary-style picture about the teenagers who haunt the murky backstreets south of Tokyo. It took off on the 16mm circuit nationally and won a couple of domestic prizes. He sold three titles to overseas markets: *Yoku* (a film from *Kurosawa's* *Yakuza*) which provided *Formy Game* (Soviet) and *Then* (Ireland) and his most recent film *Sanshōzoku* is a truly comedy hit as an advertising agency, and stars two popular young television comedians.

During the past five years, a number of Japanese companies not previously involved in the film industry have begun financing and occasionally producing feature films. One of the most successful is the Kodakawa Publishing Company, alone recently a number of top manufacturers, record suppliers and even soft drink makers have moved into the field.

The need for facilities coupled with chronic land shortages and inflated real estate costs is a major problem here. However a group of companies including Nippon Television, Toho, Kinema, Kinema and Kinema Productions have together developed the eight-screen *Movie Center*, a complete mobile production unit including office space, editing suite, power systems, telephones and bar. The entire production is completely mobile. Soft drink maker Poca will be the first to use the recently completed system when they begin production in Tokyo next March.

It is a quiet time for domestic releases, the most significant being *Shōjo* (a Japanese version of the French classic, *Les deux filles en position* (*Unsubstantiated*)). It is directed by Kōryūshi Kurokawa and the performances are listed as: with Tamiyo Nakada (from Paris) playing the heroine, and the delightful Miyako Fujita (Soviet) as the villainess.

Perhaps the most pathetic film to be released in a long while is *Mineral Heaven* (*Ueno Mito*), a Japanese film. For a simple teenage tale set in Okinawa director Sato Sato made the fairly vital error of casting Kōshi Inoue as a 16-year-old hero. Unfortunately Inoue doesn't really look strong enough to tug all those heavy guns around and gives the impression of stumbling under the weight.

In competition to *Raj* Sanjiv's *Golden Story* Toho have released *Roco Monoplane* (*Golden Diamond Story*). It is a last rule, with a touching story set in Tokyo during the Second World War.

It is a good time for foreign releases with *The Color Purple*, *Alone*, *Raw Deal*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Amos* or *God*, *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* and the French hit *Three Men and a Cradle*, all in major release. Independents, *Impassioned* (which includes *Don't Play to be a Hero*) *Green*, *Golden Palace*, *Sanshōzoku* and *Jaime* *Morales* film *Madagascar*.

And the past summer month in Tokyo has seen an upsurge in French Australian film, especially on prime time television. *Fug* (*Network*) (*Network*) *My Darling* (*Network*) and *1960* television showed *Blue Film* and *Puberty Blues*.

'A' category all the way

San Sebastian '06 has a real sense of character

Madridians think that one could judge a country by its institutions. If Spain's film festivals were the deciding measure, the Spanish would seem a strange lot. Under Franco, the festival circuit is the most welcoming the regime's liberal opposition has enjoyed since its banishment from power in 1975. But although the abolition of censorship in 1977 removed the reason d'être (Spanish festivals have sprung up under democracy like, as one critic put it, mushrooms after the rain).

Festival prizes have occasionally been laudable: the Goya Festival of the Madrid for instance, once gave a Special Award to Amleto D'Alessandro. And the festival's film prizes still serve as much to irritate the local media as to entice any film's press agent. Indeed, like at San Sebastian, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's *La Muerte del Oso* (Hail to Heretic!) had to be started twice to allow the Basque bourgeoisie time to stop snoring each other in the night.

None of Spanish festivals have been consistently troubled by political unrest. Last year at San Sebastian demonstrators kept politicians cooped up in their hotels for the first day of the festival. Going to San Sebastian is a seasoned motorist's nightmare: it is an exercise in misanthropy.

As it turned out, however, the 1998 edition was the most successful in years. The film selection was apparently stronger than at recent years, and was less dependent on multinational releases than has sometimes been the case.

Most placidly went to Yoshitaka Yoshida's *Virgin no Hataraku* (The Promise), which depicts a family burdened by a terrible, quieting grandfather who, constantly attempts suicide. Yoshida cleverly balances modernity and tradition: nothing is Japanese today starts with a more Western-style detective plot, centered around the question of who finally kills the grandfather. Japanese style looms on listening in on conversations on an overhead radio reminiscent of *Antonia*.

The Promise has moments of heartrending emotion (the detective is not, however, a hyperbole) and what is fascinating is apparent: it is a depiction of vulnerability in post-war Japan. Japanese are caught by it not only into a character's mind, even Yoshida acknowledges the grandfather's vision of a pilgrimage he had wanted to go on with his wife.

The grandfather lives in high mountains, his misty presence infusing everything around him, even by his observation (in this vision it) have ever found them to be faithful eyes reproducing the presence of a Japanese wilderness: two figures with shallow, broad-brimmed hats look up the peak of a volcano, a person like like reflects in the volcano's crater.

Chief of Justice, *Margaret Lozano* (left), *Angela Molina* (center) and *Carolina Silva* in *Guernica*, Angón's look at the Sky

Quality of films aside, this year's festival also drew on the multiple presence of films from Latin America as well as Spain to achieve that elusive festival virtue: a sense of cohesiveness. A key feature in the Hispanic film was their concentration on state foreign Argentine director Eliseo Subitelo for example, used a 1984 advance on his budget from the small but burgeoning Argentine film board to make *Horizonte* (towards the South) (the outlandish Latin American offering at the festival). Subitelo's film is a cold parallel distinguished by excellent acting and a winning camerawork, ending the tale of an exiled immigrant who comes to post-relationship Argentina in search for a quiet life, the opposite.

Spanish films similarly rely on state finance: between September 1995 and June 1998 some 46 Spanish films divided up 1,513 million pesetas at an average of 33 million per film (around \$400,000 per film).

After several years of solid but largely unremarkable productions,



Going south, *Elvira Quintanilla* (left) and *Maria Silva* in *Mira Looking Towards the South* (left).

the projects undertaken by the state are beginning to show greater variety and nerve. This year's *Glaze* (by Shell) went to 27 Hours (27 Hours) the latest Luis Quintero director, which follows a young man's drug addict friend José (Antonio) as he searches for his lost life.

Montxo Armendariz's film has splendid central performances and a lovely lyrical mood from the overlay of somber Basque songs. It also suggests that Armendariz is one of the few directors in Europe who still thinks systematically about where to

put his camera. In 27 Hours can feel scenes and tracking those across a sunny, physical codicily to the spatial realness of Basque youth.

Refreshingly different, larger in budget and conception and aimed at the Spanish film festival, was *El Huevo* (The Egg) by Angón's film driven by a common theme: a recent Spanish cinema. *El Huevo* was what needs to be the cultural slouching out of Europe: many directors have attempted to establish a sense of cultural bearing in connection with the past. And *El Huevo* is the early seventies: a period during which Spain modernized faster than any other country in western Europe.

Angón follows plays *Rosa* (a sensual country girl who comes to Madrid as a wet nurse and eventually makes good at a high society restaurant). The film has many of Quintero's trademarks: a beautiful picture, a mix of comedy and tragedy, drama, realism, and a delicate and delicate story.

Based on the relationship between *Rosa*, her grandmother (played by the magnificent Margaret Lozano) and *Rosa*'s daughter (who makes the grandmother a country representative) that the director constructs a marvelous metaphor for the continuity underlying Spain's social change: transformation from a traditional agricultural land into a modern industrial state.

Over the past few decades it would be a pity of PAF to record San Sebastian's A category is a qualification which marks a with Dennis Berry and Venice and are considered to it for a provisional two year period in the spring of 1995.

San Sebastian still suffers, however, from a radical ambivalence. On the one hand it is one of Europe's most beautiful prize: rolling with state-backed, state-backed and sponsored awards of state funds and subsidies. On the other it is the most open eye of the most politically troubled regions in Europe. The first stability of the San Sebastian Film Festival depends on a resolution of the Basque problem. And that means, not with the festival, but with Felipe Gonzalez's socialist government in Madrid.

John Hargrave



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1976-1986

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MOVIES

BY

MICROCHIP

3

Compucast: Actors at your fingertip

It takes time to change from storing information on index cards in folders or in filing cabinets to storing that same material on a computer. Often too, there is no obvious improvement — until the first time a search is made for cross-referenced data. An obvious example would be a stock-ticking service for material of top clouds with the more precise requirement that the clouds be over the ocean and the weather steady. Done manually, that search could require time or make separate operations and, depending on the size of the stock-ticking library, could take a lot of time. But if the listing was computerized, the search for something that matched all those criteria could be carried out in seconds. Producers inventories location files and vehicles are all prime candidates for computerization.

But what about performers? To reduce the subtleties of actors and actresses to a database that would speed in casting might raise hair on actors' and actresses' backs. But so would *Heavenly Creatures* and *Ami* of *Polanski* be scanned and eliminated until he passed over to sleep in the memory of an experienced casting agent as to any mechanical film system. Finding minor roles, character types and extras is harder still, especially when there are further requirements such as skills (the ability to ride a horse) and particular physical characteristics — or, for that matter, both — a fat man who can ride a horse.

American Steve Kuhn trained as a computer programmer, then decided to change careers and become an actor. This coincided with his move to Australia, but after a couple of years trying to get roles, he went back to computers to pay the rent. One of the software packages he was selling was a database (no sexual language) and a week's a great leap to think of applying this to the film industry. The idea of a central, computerized database of actors and actresses would, he felt, solve a lot of the problems he had experienced himself, such as trying to make sure that his resume was presented to the right casting agents and producers and that the information was up to date. He was also convinced that producers would see the advantage in saving habits of valuable telephone and in finding personnel, key people and locations.

He approached Showcase Publications, because of their reputation and their industry standing. They welcomed the idea, but only if Kuhn came along to set up the scheme. He is now a partner with them in Compucast and his agent says it is fast becoming a money-earner. The idea was also modified, however, instead of having their own computer space, they now buy "space" on the legal and government agency database system, CLIPS. This gives the user the advantage of an established and undisturbed, and Australia-wide network that can be accessed in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra through local numbers and elsewhere via Australia for the price of a local call.

Judging by the number of computers sitting on film industry desks, it would appear that we are beginning to accept the change from a paper-based information system to an electronic one. But often, we still treat our computers more like smart typewriters or overweight calculators. And, as Fred Harden points out in the third of his reports on how computers can help you (Parts 1 and 2 were in Cinema Papers 51 and 52), there is a lot more to them than that, particularly when it comes to casting, communications and sound dubs.

The incorporation of Compucast into CLIPS ensures a fast response and a 24-hour hotline. There is support for 300, 1000 and 100000 bits modern and a number of different terminals. Indeed, the preliminary Compucast manual actually uses pages from the CLIPS manual but the operation of the database is simple and uses step-by-step selection from menus (note the diagram on page 71). It is possible to bypass the menu once you have become familiar with the database, but they have this advantage of prompting a logical sequence and provide a way of keeping errors.

The computer used by most Compucast subscribers are Microsofts and IBM compatible, but almost any computer will do. Compucast do recommend a spreadsheet, spreadsheet, programming, though *Comcast* which is widely used and one of the best available. They also supply a database that makes the right call process simpler.

At present, the company is making some initial cost concessions to attract both suppliers of information and users. The partnership and users of the partnership will be \$25 a year, but users of the initial fee will be \$1000 plus the time spent online. This is charged at \$1 a minute, so the system is certainly not for casual use. But considering the time saved by comparison with a careers and search the Compucast system could probably justify itself on a single production, even on the information it now has available.

At present, the whole of Showcase and Compucast is a business

online, along with the 50 or so connections and changes that were notified within a month of its publication. When it is the case that the content is one of current information on a changing industry, an electronic database is more valuable than hard copies, because of the ease with which it can be updated. "They have," says Kuhn, "we entered the information from the book last year, the book will use entries already in the computer."

Suppliers have the opportunity to make changes in the information now listed and Compucast will accept telephone notification of alterations. But says Kuhn, "we obviously need to have written verification of a request to change someone's entry, so we ask for the changes to be notified in writing by fax or letter. We also have an electronic network, and that can be used if preferred."

The value of a cross-referenced search obviously depends on the data supplied to Compucast, provide a standard time to ensure they get the right information. And are able to grade it — i.e., how good is an actor's horse-riding skills and how good is a horse-riding skills? And if a full curriculum vitae is supplied, a user could find an actor's name from no more than the character played in a particular movie. Similarly, if the information required for production personnel, a user could find a media-maker with particular news of the commercial he or she worked on.

To rely from this Compucast users may control people directly



From computers to video to non-saturated video: Computers' server sales.

Typing agents to personal addresses or phone numbers has given it an agent's involved. But details on personnel, clothing size, etc. are available, however, along with types of sandals that actors have, and the appearance an actor can handle with and without makeup.

Until there are enough people using it, the system will have a limited value. But because it will be the bigger companies who already have computer experience that will be attracted, the value of a listing is not necessarily related to the number of subscribers. Says Kohn: "Computers are entertaining to make sure that there will soon be about 25 significant users of the system. We will use them as part of our old programs to make sure that we can effectively provide exactly the service the industry wants. We get [Hollywood] support from the producers; they sit down in front of the machine and say, 'We want this'."

Instant postman: the Scorpio Entertainment Network

As PCs enter their infatuated many agents are coming to believe that their true value will be in communications. Terms such as modem, baud rate, digital, analog and parity are all part of what the computer magic agents are referred to: network revolution.

Pioneering the concept of the Scorpio Entertainment Network (SEN), Peter Spedding (senior) says that while he is part of the communications industry, we don't see a full communications. And this, he feels, will have to change if we are to become part of the world industry SEN, an electronic mail and information system, has been his way of perceiving that change and he happily does his best to explain it as production assistant on *Charlie's Auntie* in a perfect state of the network, and of electronic mail in general.

Already a computer convert — he is, partly with Jay Jarratt in Scorpio Computers who sold the Movie-Magic budget programme and the Scorpio script reformulating software already examined on these pages — Spedding has volunteered to spend up to two months on location in northern Australia, related in his country, and the relations for communication with the production office. When the production moved to New York, the sophisticated increased, but there were no added difficulties of changes in time zones and in

crossed costs. Because he was already taking a computer with him to the production occurring using an electronic mail system was an obvious solution. Later when the move was playing in packed houses in Australia, he used that time to store information on addresses supplied by the distributor. He would then download that onto his computer and use the information in a simple spreadsheet programme that calculated return on costs and produced when correspondence was being up and further advertising was required. This same information was also available via the electronic mail system to producer John Coover.

Electronic mail systems use a cheap terminal or communications programme on a personal computer to send messages via a modem attached to the telephone. In other words, on to all subscribers to the network, simultaneously. Because the information is usually transferred as a formatted data, network, the cost to receive the system is, in most cases, the cost of a local call, plus the charge made by the provider of the network. The messages are left in electronic mailboxes for retrieval at the user's convenience. And the text messages they can be sent when an office is unattended or the subscriber is asleep.



Remember shell speak was film-maker Peter Spedding of the Scorpio Entertainment Network.

The Scorpio Network uses GDT's Gateway data network which offers a minute to the worldwide ITT electronic mail service. To this, Scorpio have added a lot of service for users without access to a local mailbox. This is changed in standard rates, and the message is transferred to the user's electronic mailbox.

There are other networks offering mail services, but it is the industry specific nature of the Scorpio Network that makes it compelling. Other film and TV industry users agree. If the other user is on line at the same time, there is a Chat mode that will allow you to type messages to each other (note a novelty that is not alternative to the telephone) and the menu also lists News and Information, including headlines from BBC, AP, Reuters, Economic Times. In addition, there is a lot of current and planned productions with contact names and telephone numbers of key cast, the film, John Winton and John Aulander.

At the moment, though, a lot of these are sleeping services, or at least in a very limited form, and they are really there to demonstrate SEN's potential. It appears to say: "That is the basic facility and the real and information up-loading that most users want. This was certainly my own experience with SEN while working for McGilly and McGilly on pre-production of *The Last Frontier*. McGilly's supervisor is different, but McGilly is the same. (Producer) and Post-Production departments and Kevin Wright — another occasionally fully committed to computers — used the SEN when the production office moved to Alice Springs. With a personal computer and a modem, the unit sent information to their travel co-ordinators, Budget Air Services in Colorado, and to the post production office at Melbourne in Sydney."

Easier on the ear: The SoftSound Dubbing Chart

A third new application for the computer is to speed up — at minimum the drudgery of — repetitive work. The SoftSound software, specially written for sound post production by two Melbourne programmers, is attractive because it effectively takes an essential dubbing editor for other tasks, and speeds up the production of the script, contains dubbing charts required for sound mixes on feature work.

Bob Tasker and Martin Campbell became involved in what looks like the simple process of using a computer to draw up the individualised sound charts for a script and add a dubbing editor. The task, according to a list of its own, however, has taken him two of three over a year of solid work to complete.

The manual is a master worksheet of the drawing charts that list the sound mixer when new scenes dialogue and music are forthcoming in the mix, whether the sound will cut in or square in later, and the duration of the effect. Other alternative inputs will be fed up, so as a choice of the best mix can be made when the mix is all added in context, it is not lost. And a fourth component to be added, even on simple scenes, and stay all require listing.

The chart is usually drawn up by the sound assistant, who then has to follow it every time a minor addition or deletion is made to the scene. SoftSound was born with the idea of a simple grid list editor that would make these changes to the scene and then list the computer software the altered pages. The programme had its first test on Entertainment Media's *Jack O' Diamonds* the result was a great improvement. However, list like the charts provided by the programme were much easier to work from and, with some minor improvements, could speed up the mixing process and save time and money.

Operation of the SoftSound programme requires a computer that is IBM compatible with a hard disk and a high-resolution monitor to show the display of the multiple



Spending up your sound club: Bob Tasker of SoftSound.

columns. The programme is simple to use, with an intuitive, somewhat concept of a window that looks into a graph area and a toolbar with a function key. It is a feature of the function and control keys that allow the forms and images, including sections of sound and video, to be moved easily and accurately by typing a pre-code, if preferred. It is typed into the codes, and simplified editing around it. It is, even when the scale is reduced to show the relationship between the multiple columns.

The output is a colour print-out and SoftSound never made it possible to use some of the cheaper models. The trade-off here from cost is speed, when the programme starts printing, it is time to go to lunch. It is a really not necessary to make the initial chart and specific pages can be selected for printing. SoftSound have standardisable paper size and provide pre-printed continuous forms. The programme seems to handle special key codes, well, and should take any a short time to learn.

However, its main use is to handle the resulting a long and complex chart, most of the programme will probably not be of great use for commercials or short films. But for the sound editor on a series, or a feature, it could return its cost in one go. It is a simple concept that has been well considered, and should be readily accepted by the specific market it is aimed. However, since Film Computers are developing the SoftSound programme, and will market it in Australia and New Zealand, where it looks a useful addition to their Film Management System, schedule, budget and accounting packages (see Cinema Pages 5).

Contact information

Computer Information Retrieval System 20 Chesham Street, St Leonards, NSW 2205. Phone: 025 222 2144. Telex: ARI 72575. Fax: 025 222 4765. Hours on application. Contact: Steve Kuhn, General Manager.

Scorpio Entertainment Network 22 Oaking Street, Glades, NSW 2037. Phone: 025 880 8088. Joining fee: \$150 for first box. Cost per month: \$10. Connection fees in Australia: \$2.50 per month. Advertising rates: \$15 per column per month. Contact: Jay Jarratt or Peter Spedding.

SoftSound Dubbing Charts available from Rembrandt Film Computers, 16A, Warragamba Road, Glades, NSW 2036. Phone: 025 222 2144. Fax: 025 222 4765. For price and further details, contact Peter Tasker.

SIX EASY STEPS TO AN ACTRESS WHO CAN RIDE HORSES: AN EXAMPLE OF A SEARCH THROUGH COMPUCAST'S ELECTRONIC MENU, AND A PIC OF THE REAL THING: ACTRESS FIONA CORKE.

1

COMPUCAST MAIN MENU 50

SELECT DESIRED DATA BASE

- 1 PERF PERFORMERS
- 2 PAL PROPS, ANIMALS AND LOCATIONS
- 3 AGNT AGENCY LISTING
- 4 CAF CONTACTS AND FACILITIES
- 5 PROD PRODUCTION PERSONNEL
- 6 ECAT EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES CATALOGUE
- 7 EXIT EXIT FROM MENU
- 8 END END FROM SYSTEM

2

PERFORMERS MENU 5F

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE
- 3 MALE AND FEMALE
- 4 NATIVE STATUS
- 5 COMPUCAST MAIN MENU
- 6 LOGOFF

ENTER NUMBER FROM MENU ... 2
EQUITY MEMBERS ONLY ? - (Y or N) ...

3

SELECT SEARCH ATTRIBUTE 51

- 1 NAME
- 2 AGENT
- 3 AGE
- 4 PHYSICAL DETAILS
- 5 MEASUREMENTS
- 6 CLOTHING SIZES
- 7 SKILL REQUIREMENTS
- 8 WARDROBE
- 9 EXPERIENCE
- 10 COMMENTS
- 11 NATIONALITY
- 12 NATURAL ACCENT
- GO TO: 13 PERFORMERS MENU
- 14 NATIVE STATUS
- 15 DISPLAY MENU

NUMBER FOUND: 185

ENTER NUMBER FROM MENU ... 7
ENTER REQUIREMENT, E.G. HORSE RIDING ... TENNIS

4

- 1 EXCELLENT 56
- 2 EXCELLENT OR GOOD
- 3 EXCELLENT, GOOD OR FAIR

SELECT PROFICIENCY DESIRED ... 2
43 found
MORE SKILL REQUIREMENTS ? (Y or N) ...

NUMBER FOUND: 1
ENTER NUMBER FROM MENU ... 3

Corke, Fiona
Fiona Productions (03) 699 2446

SKILLS

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
Horse Riding, Motor Car Driving
- FAIR
Gymnastic, Roller Skating, Tennis, Swimming, Snoring,
Table Tennis

TYPE 'T' TO RETURN TO DISPLAY SELECTIONS MENU
--T

6



ROUND UP



In the run up to the Bicentennial Australia is making its way into more and more film roles. In Philippe Mora's *The Managery* — *Managery* is an eight episode TV series — a number of well-known local actors are playing Americans and the tribe of misanthropic entrepreneurs are purely indigenous. The feature began a two-week shoot on 10 October and the special effects academy is being headed by Bob McCarron.

Mora is a film fanatic in the feature *The Two Guardians* which goes under way in late September. One of the main locations is a time-travelling city which has been a time flight of fantasy for production designer George Laidle. The film is directed by Brian Hayward (the author of *Mad Max II*) and production continues at Herndon Studios until 30 November. Another Tony Danza feature *The Lightkeepers*, is also shooting in South Australia (see the Location Report in this issue pp 36-37).

Gaelen Armstrong's *High Tide* wraps on 22 November; it stars Judy Davis, who plays Lili, a back-

Part of the new wave of comedy, director Tim Rothman with Phillip Donhouse as the star of *Once Dear Departed*

up singer for an Elton Presley tribute and Colin Firth. Russell Boyd is *DOP*. Another comedy on the coast, Phil Moya's *Promise to Keep* (starring Wendy Hughes and John Lurie) has been titled *Shadow of the Preschool*.

When Night is a Slow Moving Train produced by Ross Denney and Philip Jaffel and directed and scripted by the irascible Bob Rife, starts shooting on 3 November. Further into production the comedy feature *Once Dear Departed* produced by Philip Konradell written by Steve J. Speard and directed by Tim Rothman wrapped on 4 October. The two leads, Pamela Stephenson and Gary McDermott are supported by comic actors Orestis Bonifant, Noel Ferrier, John Cleake, Ignazio Jones, Patrick Cook, Alison Downey and So Chae-hwan.

Gavin Levy is finishing the end of post production on a documentary

*When we go again, Gary McDermott in *Once Dear Departed**

about the Australian comedian who, supposedly, didn't find his way into the above cast. Mike Dallas (in a more serious role, Levy is also producing) made an in-depth study of Peter Allen Gore, the Australian parodist patronised by the Marquis de Sade. It is titled *The White Monkey*.

George Clooney and Catherine Dalton have been filming on another frontier. They 50 minute documen- tary *When She Cries* looks at the work of five Maboque women writers and their struggle for the liberation of their people.

With *Inside* — a black comedy about a group of men who get a role in post-production. Co-produced, directed and written by George Madin and Jennifer Hart, proof that an all-woman crew is possible. Rod Morgan directed his short comedy, *The Anniversary* as 'roadcap'. This film too, is nearly finished and has been produced for 30mm theatrical release.

Finishing work is coming out of Pine Studios. Paul Lyle, owner of 'Living Camera' style documentaries, *Getting Straight*, *Ark* in *Doyle* and *Singled* are all various stages of completion. Tony Haydon is executive producer and Tony Wilson is *DOP*.

Big budget television production now seems to be in full swing. *Shogun* on the ABC/Networks Production films eight-hour miniseries *The Wind and the Stars* began in Tahiti on 22 September. Written by Peter Weidman, it is the story of James Cook, and is scheduled to complete

production in March 1987 in Sydney.

The telefeature *Watch the Shadow Dance* directed by Mark John, wraps in mid-November. It is part of the 'Tarnishers' New package of movies being produced by Dennis Hannon, who resigned as general manager of The Production Code in August to work instead with *When She Cries* and the next feature in the package, *Eye for Eye*, directed by Sophie Turner. *Turner* is scheduled to shoot after the New Year.

Production is complete on the trailer *The Humpty Comedy Mix* a film loosely based on the David Campbell affair in which Paul Hogan is (brother and) dealer at a weekend disco and is the second feature for *DOP* Martin McCarron.

The Screenplay *Measures* was written by Henry White, who on 1 December it is based on the novel by Russell Bedford, scripted by Roger Sengupta and Phil Armitage is shooting. Executive producers are John P. Alan Heston and John Burrows. The miniseries *Fields of Fire* finished on night work shoot in early December. Directed by David Ellick and Steven Koppman, it is set in the sugar cane fields of northern Australia.

Finally the American fascination for the strange customs down- under continues. *State of the People* US television series *Fields of Fire* spent four weeks in Australia in September shooting a special feature, episode and promoting at Ayers Rock.

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